

AN APPEAL
TO THE
PUBLICK,

Together with some
CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
Present critical and dangerous STATE
OF THE
STAGE
IN
IRELAND.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, Deputy Master of the
REVELS, and Manager of the Theatre-Royal.

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STAG

IN

W. E. A. M. D.

By THOMAS SHELDON, M.D. &c.

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Considerations, &c.

IF ever Man in his Station had a fair Pretence for making his Case known to the Public, and applying to them for Assistance, in support of their own Interests, against an artful Conspiracy, formed to destroy their most rational Entertainment, in order to render it wholly subservient to the private Passions and Gain of a few: If ever Man in his Station had a Right to complain to the World, that after twelve Years Labour, attended with great Hazard, Expence, and Loss, to establish a Theatre on a good and durable Foundation in this Kingdom; an Attempt should be openly made unsupported by any Authority, without Provocation given, without the least Shadow of Pretence, or any Argument offered in it's Favour that would bear Examination, to frustrate so good an Intention, and cruelly to deprive the Undertaker of so arduous a Task from ever reaping any Reward of his Labours: The Manager of the Theatre-Royal would have been justified to the World, if he had, upon the first Proposal to erect a new Play-house in this City, published a true State of the Case, and laid open the Cause of the Public, of his

Opponents, and his own, in the same just Light wherein they will now be seen.

But as he has ever considered such an Use of the Press, as a shameful Prostitution of one of the most valuable Blessings arising from our Constitution; as he has ever observed, that they who fly first to such Arms, are conscious of a wrong Cause, which cannot be supported by Reason and Truth; whose mild Voice they endeavour to drown by Clamour, raised thro' false Representations, bold Calumny, and confident Assertions; he was resolved that his Cause should not be supported in such a Way as might prejudice the thinking part of Mankind against it.

Besides, as he would always wish to approve himself a Christian, not in Profession only, but in Practice, by avoiding as much as possible to give any ground for Strife; and a good Subject, by not stirring up Disputes, and Party Contentions, hard as his Case was, he took the Resolution of remaining silent. If the Law of the Land could not redress him; if the King's Patent could not be supported; if the Legislature did not think it a Matter of sufficient moment to call for the Interposition of their Authority; in that Case he would have acquiesced, and sat down contented with any Loss, rather than have been instrumental in reviving Party Rage, which has done such Mischief to this poor Island.

But since his Opponents, not contented with carrying on a most destructive Scheme, which, if executed, will probably end in the irretrievable Ruin of the Stage in this Kingdom; not contented with coming in at the Eve of a Battle, to ravish from the Manager the Fruits and Glory of an hard-fought Field; or like Poachers, to snap up the tired Chace, and rob the fair Hunter of his Prey, have openly called upon the Public to assist them in these Measures; and in order to induce them to it, have endeavoured to mislead their Judgments, by many specious and plausible Arguments; nor satisfied with this, have in the most inhu-

inhuman Manner, by the grossest Misrepresentations, and most groundless Calumnies, endeavoured to asperse the Character of a Man, who deserved far other Treatment at some of their Hands; for he can truly say with *Lear*,

He is a Man more sinned against than sinning.

His Duty to the Public now calls upon him to prevent the ill Effects of such Delusion; and he owes it to himself to clear his Conduct from the many false Charges which have been spread, with such a sort of Zeal, and such unwearied Industry, as are known to be the Offspring of the never-sleeping Spirits of Envy, Malice, and Uncharitableness.

If in doing this, he should be sometimes obliged to recriminate, he hopes to be excused, when it is seen that he lays no Blame on his Antagonists but what is necessary to his own Justification. Were he inclined to retaliate personal Abuse, the World will allow he has an ample Field to range in, without exceeding the Bounds of Truth. But ungenerous as his Enemies have been, they have to do with an Adversary, who scorns to return their poisoned Arrows. He has no Occasion to supply the want of Reason with Scurrility, or of Truth with Calumny; nor will he follow their Example, in openly shewing how weak the Foundation of their Cause was, by producing such a Quantity of foreign Matter, to serve as Props and Buttresses to a patched up Building.

It is with the utmost Reluctance that he is once more compelled to enter the Lists with Story Adversaries; with Men, who in their very Manner of attacking him, give up all Pretensions to Humanity; with Backbiters, Slanderers, and anonymous Satyrists; with Bravoes, who use the Dark Lanthorn and Stiletto; with Barbarians, who cover themselves with Moss, or skulk behind Trees, to take Aim unseen.

Oft has he been engaged in fuch unequal Combats. Oft has he maintained the Poft of Danger, and led the Forlorn Hope. But he cannot think of his Hair-breadth Escapes without fhuddering, nor reflect on the Bruifes he received without wifhing to avoid fuch Encounters. It is true, he ever got the better in thofe Difputes, and for a time filenced the Clamours of his Enemies; but his Victories were purchafed at fo dear a Rate, that he was undone by their Number. Hard, very hard indeed has been his Situation. The Employments in which he was engaged required the utmoft Attention of every Hour of his Life. His Enemies let flip no Opportunity of arraigning his Conduct, and calling him before the Bar of the Public. If he was filent, he was pronounced guilty; if he defended himfelf, he could not do it but with great Loſs of Time, and confequently of Profit. When in his own Vindication he has been obliged, in order to ſhew the Falſhood of the Charge againſt him, to lay open Facts which proved the Rectitude of his Conduct, he was immediately accuſed of Vanity, Arrogance, and writing Panegyrics on himſelf. And when his Opponents have been beaten out of every Argument, and filenced by the Force of Truth, they never failed afterwards, with that fort of confummate Audaciouſneſs, which attends Violence and Falſhood, to lay their own Crimes at his Door; and though he never once was the Aggreſſor; nay, though he never ſtood upon his Defence (having often ſubmitted for Peace-ſake) but when Self-prefervation required it; to charge him with being a turbulent Man, and a ſtirrer up of Contentions and Broils.

The inveterate and perfecuting Spirit of his Foes, which let flip no Opportunity of attacking him, whenever there was the leaſt Open, at length answered one End propoſed by perfevering Malignity, that is, *calumniate boldly, and ſomething will ſtick.* The

Manager

Manager to his Cost, found the Truth of this Anti-christian Maxim. For tho' there never was a single Fact proved against him, tho' he always shewed by his Conduct, that as it was apparently his interest, so was it evidently his Inclination to avoid Strife; yet the Bulk of Mankind, whose Enquiries generally stop at the Surface of Things, concluded that a Man so often accused, and so often embroiled, must have sometimes been in the wrong, and sometimes guilty of the Charges against him. Such a Disposition in the World, cunning Adversaries well know how to mould to their own Ends; nor has it escaped their Sagacity. Not contented with new Charges, they have mustered up with great Industry, all that ever were made against him. Conscious as they are of the weakness of their Cause, their whole Force is employed in endeavouring to destroy the Person who alone could support the other Side. They know if they can instil a sufficient degree of Prepossession, the Merits of the Case will either not be enquired into, or not be seen thro' the bias of a warped Judgment. It is incumbent therefore on him to remove those Clouds of Prejudice, before the rays of Truth can break forth.

The two general Points objected to the Manager are, the number of his Enemies, and a turbulent Disposition, fond of stirring up Broils. But if he can shew that the number of his Enemies arose partly from a vigorous and steady discharge of his Duty to the Publick, in a most difficult and dangerous Employment; and partly from interested Views of several who wanted to supplant him, and reap the Fruits of his Labours, after he had overcome Difficulties once thought insuperable, and put the Theatre on such a Footing, as to afford a prospect of future Profit: If he also proves, that, so far from stirring up Strife, he ever acted on the defensive, that he ran frequent Risques of Life and Fortune, and sacrificed large Sums of Money on various Occasions, to the establishment

establishment of public Peace, Decency, and Order, these Objections will of Course vanish like the rest.

It is generally thought that a Man cannot have a great number of Enemies, without being in some degree blameable. But History, Antient and Modern, abounds with innumerable Proofs to the contrary. Whenever Party-rage has been let loose in a Country; whenever the Cry of the Multitude has been thought the Voice of Justice and Reason; the best and most excellent of Men have ever had the greatest number of Enemies, and have been most persecuted. The History of the popular Government of *Athens* affords as many Instances, as there are produced in it great and eminent Characters of this Truth, exemplary Virtue, eminent Services done to their Country, and the highest Spirit of Patriotism, not only were sufficient Reasons for, but almost infallibly did occasion the Death, or Banishment of all those who were possessed of such distinguished Merit. Nor did *Rome* in some Instances fall short of the ingratitude of *Athens* in that Respect. The very naming *Theomistocles*, *Aristides*, *Socrates* and *Cicero*, will make it needless to say more on this Head.

Here no doubt, the Manager's Enemies will exultingly cry out, what Pride! what Arrogance! to compare himself with such illustrious Names! But far be such Pride, such Arrogance from his Thoughts. The only Use he would make of this Argument is, that if Men known to be of such blameless Lives, of such exalted Virtue, many of them of the highest Rank, invested with Power and Authority, could raise to themselves so many Enemies, merely from a just and steady Discharge of their Duty; how much more likely was it that a poor Man, without their Talents and Advantages, in a Station the most open of all others to public Censure, but without the support of Power or Dignity; in a Station which he had raised to a sufficient degree of Credit with the Wise and Good, to draw upon him the Envy and Malice of the

Ignorant,

Ignorant, and the Wicked, and yet whose Weakness at the same Time invited their Attacks; how much more likely was it indeed, that he should raise to himself a number of Enemies by the same Means, and on the same Principles. He hopes it will not be called boasting in him to say, that he has always endeavoured to do his Duty, to the utmost of his Knowledge and Abilities; nor that it will be imputed to Vanity, if he produces the Principles upon which he acted, and shews the Conformity of his Actions to those Principles, when he has been arraigned in so extraordinary a Manner with respect to his Conduct, and his Intentions so grossly misrepresented.

Mr. *Sheridan* after having been some Time on the Stage, looking with Detestation on the various Corruptions and Abuses, which thro' a long train of Mismanagement, had rendered it a public Nuisance, and the Pest of the Town; took the Resolution to attempt a total Reformation; to give it a new Constitution; to establish Order and Decency, and if possible, place it on a better and more durable Foundation than any Theatre in Europe could boast. He foresaw innumerable Difficulties in the Way, but as he was certain that the Accomplishment of his Point would be productive of the highest publick Benefits to his City, in particular, and to the Kingdom in general; and that it probably would end also in great Advantage to himself, he determined at all Hazards, to undertake it. In the prosecution of such a Design, the utmost Steadiness was necessary, and the strictest Observation of Rules and Discipline. These he uniformly adhered to, unawed by Fear, uninfluenced by Pain. No Danger deterred him, no Labour discouraged him, no Hazard startled him, no Expence stopped him. Whenever the Public, and his private Interests became incompatible, the latter always gave Way. Romantic and even mad as such Notions may be deemed in these Days, they were what influenced his Actions; and his Conduct, when tried by these

Principles will be found uniform throughout; but upon any other, must appear inconsistent and absurd to the last Degree. At once, therefore to acquit himself of all the Charges brought against him, and to lay open the true Source of the constant opposition which has been given to him and his Measures, he humbly begs leave to lay before the Publick, a summary Account of the most material transactions, which have passed since his undertaking the Conduct of the Theatre.

In his first necessary Step towards the Accomplishment of his Design he met with an Opposition, which, whether it be considered with respect to the badness of its Foundation, the Virulence with which it was carried on, the vast Numbers engaged in it, and the length of Time taken up (for it lasted many Weeks,) exceeded any thing of that Kind ever known in a civilized Country. A view of the following Paper published by the Manager in his Defence upon that Occasion, will at once shew his Principles, and lay open one source of Enmity to him, which has never since been closed.

“ Mr. *Sheridan* undertook the *Theatre* this
 “ Winter, under the most disadvantageous Circum-
 “ stances that ever were known. The *Proprietors*
 “ were determin’d to shut up the Doors, tho’ at a cer-
 “ tain Loss of six hundred Pounds. For, as thirteen
 “ Performers had left them since last Season, amongst
 “ whom were some who were esteem’d the most Capi-
 “ tal, and as there were none to supply their Room, they
 “ had no Hopes that *Plays* could be at all perform’d.
 “ The Undertaker of a *Theatre* so circumstanced,
 “ could have but little Hopes of Profit, nay, in all
 “ human Probability, he could have no Expectations
 “ but of being a Loser.
 “ But how agreeably was he disappointed! He
 “ found that Industry and a Willingness to please
 “ stood in Lieu of great Abilities; and to the eternal
 “ Honour of *Dublin*, be it spoken, good and chaste
 “ *Plays*, decently represented, drew crowded Audien-

ces, without the Assistance of *Dances, Pantomimes,*
or even *Farces*.

" In Return of such signal Encouragement, of
such unexpected Favour, Mr. *Sheridan* thought it
incumbent on him, to spare no Pains to add to the
Entertainment of the *Publick*, by a strict Observa-
tion of Decorum, by introducing Order and Regu-
larity, and by an Endeavour to reform many Abu-
ses, which thro' a long Course of Mismanagement,
had crept into a disorderly Stage.

" The two great Nuisances universally complain'd
of, were the Upper-Gallery and the Crouds that
us'd to assemble on the Stage itself.

" The Upper-Gallery which us'd to be constantly
so noisy, Mr. *Sheridan* contriv'd to make one of the
quietest Parts of the House.

" He then endeavour'd to keep the Stage clear,
and by that Means prevent the Disturbances which
almost every Night interrupted the Entertainment
of the Audience.

" This he thought his Duty to the *Publick* oblig'd
him to do. In the Discharge of that Duty, tho'
done in the mildest Way, upon the utmost Provo-
cation, he was publicly insulted in the most igno-
minious Manner; he was afterwards us'd in pri-
vate in a Way which human Nature could not bear.
Let any Man knock at his own Breast, and ask, if
this is not true?

" If the *Publick* is of Opinion, that Mr. *Sheridan*
ought to have submitted to such Treatment, and
that by being on the Stage he is depriv'd of the
common Privileges of Man, they are Terms too hard
for him to submit to, nor should any Consideration
upon Earth prevail on him to appear there again on
such Conditions.

" The only Privilege Mr. *Sheridan* requires in his
publick Capacity is, that provided he offers no In-
sult to any Body, he shall not be insulted. That
is a right which, it is to be hoped, the meanest Sub-
ject of the King of *Great Britain* enjoys. " He

“ He is extremely sorry to find, that some Gentle-
 “ men are so exasperated as to utter Threats against his
 “ Person, and use their Endeavours to ruin his For-
 “ tune; especially, as he is not conscious of ever
 “ having given them the least Offence either publickly
 “ ly, or privately. Self-preservation oblig’d him to
 “ have Recourse to the Laws of the Land for Protec-
 “ tion. The Method he has observ’d in his Proceed-
 “ ings, may plainly convince those Gentlemen that
 “ he is not actuated either by Spleen or Revenge.
 “ All Gentlemen, who have apply’d for it, have been
 “ omitted out of the Prosecution; and against those
 “ who did not, the Attorney had Directions to pro-
 “ ceed in the mildest Manner. Nor is he at all in-
 “ fluenced by Self-interest on this Occasion; it is the
 “ Interest of the *Publick*, it is the Cause of the *Publick*,
 “ he would endeavour to support. As a Demonstration
 “ of this, he is willing *that every Thing which regard*
 “ *himself may be wav’d; and if those Gentlemen will meet*
 “ *and give proper Assurance to the Town, that they will*
 “ *not disturb their Entertainment for the future, Mr*
 “ *Sheridan will drop all Prosecution against them, and*
 “ *sit down content with his Loss; which is already*
 “ *considerable as to destroy all Hopes of Profit for this*
 “ *Season.*”

When this Proposal failed of it’s desired Effect, that
 of bringing about an Accommodation, Mr. *Sheridan* pro-
 secuted the chief Aggressors at Law. They were cast
 heavy Fines were imposed upon them, and sentence of
 Imprisonment passed against them. Here Mr. *Sheridan*
 had an Opportunity of proving his Principles by his
 Actions. For when it was in his Power to have reim-
 bursed himself for all his Damages and Losses, which
 amounted to a very considerable Sum; against the Ad-
 vice of his Friends, against the Opinion of those who
 knew Mankind much better than he did, he forgave the
 whole, even to the Expences of the Law-Suit. Not
 contented with this, by his earnest Solicitations and En-
 treaties, he had the Fines remitted, the Imprisonment

taken

taken off, and became himself Surety for the good Be-
 haviour of the Gentlemen. He thought that so con-
 vincing a Proof of his disinterested Views in the Settle-
 ment of the Stage would have silenced all Clamour,
 and if they had any Generosity in their Breasts, his op-
 ponents from Enemies would have become his Friends.
 Nothing indeed but his regard to the future Peace and
 Welfare of the Theatre, could have induced him to
 have made such a Sacrifice at a Time that he could
 not ill afford it. The Event did not answer his Ex-
 pectation; for tho' the disinterested part of the World
 admired and applauded his Behaviour; tho' it was of
 such a Nature as to strike Malice itself dumb, yet the
 Rancour was not the less venomous for being confin'd in
 their own Hearts. An Act of Generosity is the highest
 of Insults to proud little Minds; Evil Deeds returned
 with Benefits, do but inflame Hatred in wicked Breasts,
 and unrequited Obligations are too often considered as
 injuries never to be forgiven. He has had from that
 Time to this, but too frequent Occasions to see the
 Truth of these Maxims.

However the most essential Point was carried. He
 had long seen the Source from which all the Evils of
 the Theatre flowed, and 'till that should be stopped
 he despaired of ever being able to put it on a good
 footing. The Play-House was looked upon as a Com-
 mon, and the Actors as *feræ Naturâ*. To such an
 absurd height had Popular Prejudice risen, that the
 Owners were considered as having no Property there,
 but what might be destroyed at the Will and Pleasure
 of the People; that the Actors had not the common
 Privileges of British Subjects, but were actual Slaves;
 and that neither the one nor the other, were
 under the Protection of the Laws. Whilst such
 dangerous Opinions prevailed, what Man in his Senses
 could lay out considerable Sums upon so precarious a
 Tenure? What Man of Spirit would think of enter-
 ing into a way of Life, that would debase him beneath
 the lowest Servant? What Woman who had the least
 sense of Decency (to put Virtue out of the question,)

would

would think of exposing herself to all the brutish Behaviour of a Brothel? accordingly the State of the Stage was miserably low. They of middle Age, will be able to tell such Stories of it, as will scarce gain Credit with those who have only seen it in it's reformed Stage. Two Instances will be sufficient to make them Judges of the Point, which Mr. *Sheridan* was Witness to long before he had any thoughts of the Stage. One Night there was a Gentleman on the Stage, who after the Play, took it into his Head to amuse himself with cutting to Pieces a new Scene lately painted for a Pantomime. The Conduct of the Theatre was then in the Hands of some Actors who had taken a Lease of it from Mr. *Duval*; one of them happened to see the Gentleman entertaining himself in this way, (without any manner of Provocation but merely to indulge a wanton Humour) and in very humble Manner, begged of him to desist; acquainting him at the same Time, that the Scene had but lately cost a poor Set of Men a great deal of Money, and that they could not perform their Pantomime (upon which their chief dependance was) without it. What was the Consequence? if told, will it gain Credit? He turned his Sword from the Scene upon the Actor; with furious Execrations demanding of him how he dared to talk to a Gentleman, and three more of his Companions joining him, drew their Swords, and would infallibly have put the poor Man to Death, if some of more Humanity had not interfered.

The second Instance, is of as extraordinary a Nature. When Mr. *Garrick* paid his first Visit to this Kingdom, upon a Summer Expedition, he performed the Character of King *Lear*, Mrs. *Woffington* that of *Cordelia*. Just as they had prepared themselves for the drawing of the Scene, which was to discover the old King asleep, with his Head on the Lap of *Cordelia*, a Gentleman threw himself down on the other Side of the fair Princess, and without the least regard to her Rank, began to treat her with the

almost Indecency : Resentment followed on her Part, and Abuse on his. Mr. *Garrick* was silent, but could not help casting an Eye of Indignation at so brutal a scene, which was considered as so daring an Insult by the Gentlemen, that he and two more of his Comrades searched the House for him after the Play was over, growing with dreadful Imprecations, that they would put him to Death.

Let not the young People, who have never seen the Theatre so circumstanced, imagine that in this Representation Matters are exaggerated ; they may learn from old Stagers, that these are but a poor Sample of the innumerable Enormities then practised.

Such being the miserable State of the Place, what entertainments were to be expected there ? Certainly none that were fit for a civilized People. One Part of the House was a Bear-Garden, the other a Brothel ; the Numberers Accounts in those Days could be produced, they would make an extraordinary Figure. It was no uncommon Thing to see about twenty persons in the Pit, not a Creature in the Boxes ; one row of the middle Gallery filled, and more than an hundred People upon the Stage, who mixed with the Actors in such a Manner as scarce to be distinguished from them. The upper Gallery indeed, as every one could get Admission into it for two Pence, was generally crowded, and the Time constantly passed in squabbles, and Battles between the Footmen and the Mob. What a noble School of Manners and Virtue must the Theatre then have proved, when every youngling, by an Acquaintance with the Actors, by a bribe of a Shilling, or by Virtue of a Big Look and an Oak Saplin, could get Admission behind the scenes, and be immediately initiated into the Mysteries of *Mars* and *Venus*, that is, commence Bully and Rake.

The highest Salary then paid to any Player did not exceed what is now given to a Figure Dancer. And

Mr.

Mr. *Sberidan* has since paid more Money to a single Performer, in one Season, than would at that Time have defrayed the Charge of the whole Company of Actors, Band of Musick, and all Persons employed about the Theatre.

They who had any relish for Plays, never thought of going to them, but when some of the principal Actors from *London* deigned to pay this Town a Visit in Summer; on which Occasions, Novelty and Curiosity usually drew such Crowds together as never failed to produce Revers at that warm Season of the Year, which generally swept off Numbers. These Fevers were distinguished by the Names of the chief Performers for the Time being, and the common Expression was, that such a Person was ill, or dyed of the *Garrick*, or *Quin* Fever. The foolish Managers did not see that by this Expedient they were ruining themselves, and that by grasping at a little present Gain in the Summer, they were sure to destroy all hopes of Profit in the Winter. For the Town was not only cloyed with the continued Performances but after having seen so much better Actors, they held those of the established Company in utter Disesteem on the Comparison, and never entered the Doors of the Theatre, but upon Importunities to go to particular Benefits. Yet having once begun the Custom, they were necessitated to proceed in it, as they had no other Way to make up the Losses of the Winter, but by the Gains of the Summer; till the exorbitant Demand and Numbers of those Birds of Passage that flocked hither, swallowed up all the Gain, to the Ruin of the Undertakers.

Indeed whilst the Constitution of the Stage was so bad, it was impossible it could thrive, or subsist at all but upon temporary Expedients. Previous to the Time of its first Establishment upon any solid Basis in the Year 1747, there had been three Attempts made at an unusual Expence to support the Entertainment during the Winter Season. The first was

in the Year 1743. when the two principal Performers of the Age, Mr. *Quin* and Mrs. *Cibber*, played at the *Theatre-Royal* in *Aungier-Street*. But tho' the Proprietors of that House did not pay them half of what has since been given to Actors of inferior Merit, and tho' the Whole of their Charges did not amount to one third of what has since been expended in a Season for the Entertainment of the Town, yet at the End of the Winter they found themselves considerably out of Pocket. They were often obliged to stop Payment at the Office, tho' the poor People never were to receive more than half of their wretched Stipends, the other being left in the Treasurer's Hands, as a Security for the Expence of their Benefits. The whole Receipt of the House sometimes went into Mr. *Quin's* Pocket for his Share only, who always refused to let the Curtain be drawn up 'till the Money was brought to him: And Mrs. *Cibber's* Contract was made good out of the private Purse of one of the Proprietors.

The second Attempt was in the Year 1745, after the union of the Theatres had been brought about; when the best Actors of both Companies were culled, and played with Mr. *Barry* at their Head. The Undertakers this Year sustained a greater Loss than before; they did not during the whole Season play three Times to Charges, and for three successive Weeks in the height of the Season they either dismissed, or gave out no Plays.

The third Attempt was made by Mr. *Sheridan* in the Year 1746. Previous to his undertaking the Theatres for any length of Time he determined to make a Trial of one Season, in order that he might judge what reasonable Expectation of Profit there should be on future Occasions. And that he might know how much the City of *Dublin* could afford to give at the utmost for the Support of their Diversion. He invited Mr. *Garrick* to join him in the Undertaking; he brought over Miss *Bellamy* from *London*;

and Mr. *Barry* had been previously engaged in Articles with the Proprietors from whom Mr. *Sheridan* rented the Theatres. The Readers will probably agree that here was such a Force collected for the Support of the Entertainment as probably never was known, in the Memory of Man, nor is likely to happen again during this Century. From the united Endeavours of these Performers, exerting their Faculties to the utmost, one would imagine that a just Calculation might be made of what should afterwards be considered as the *ne plus ultra* of the Theatrical Fund. And yet it is amazing to consider that Mr. *Garrick*, in his height of Reputation, during the *November* Term, in a Parliament Winter, played the fourth Night of his Performance to a Receipt of little more than forty Pounds, and that a Messenger was dispatched to Mr. *Sheridan* to hasten him to Town (he having retired for a while to prepare himself in some new Characters in the same Plays with Mr. *Garrick*) in order that they might join Forces, for the immediate Support of the Business. That with all their Strength united they were not able to exhibit Plays oftener than two Nights in a Week, and could seldom ensure good Houses to both those Nights. And that the Receipt of the whole Season did not exceed three thousand four hundred Pounds. As this Sum did not amount to more than a fifth part of what is usually received in the most flourishing of the *London* Theatres, it was but a discouraging Circumstance to a Man, whose View in undertaking the management of the Stage, could be satisfied with nothing less than putting it on an equal, or superior footing to those of *London*. But upon maturely weighing the whole, he did not give up the Point, and still hoped to succeed in his Design. He clearly saw that the best Actors in the World, whilst the Stage was crowded with rude and boisterous Spectators, and whilst there were perpetual Tumults and Uproars in the Gallery, could neither exert their own Talents properly, nor afford

afford any rational Entertainment to the sober and sensible part of Mankind. He saw that it was Curiosity alone which drew Crowds for some Time to see Actors of Eminence, in the same manner as People go to see Shews and Monsters once, but return to them no more.

It was evident to him, that whilst the Stage was in so wretched a State of Slavery, it must in general be ill supplied, and the Entertainments of course be proportionably defective. But at the same Time he clearly saw, that if there were a new Constitution established under new Regulations; if Order succeeded to Anarchy, and Decorum to Brutality; if it should be proved that the Theatre was under the Sanction of the Law, and the Performers enjoyed the common Privileges of *British* Subjects; in that Case, Dramatic Entertainments might make a speedy progress towards Perfection; the Number of Audiences would be immediately increased, by the frequent Presence of the grave, the regular, the sober part of Mankind; and as the Profession of an Actor would not only lose the unmerited Disgrace which had been affixed to it, but in time might become reputable, by being supplied with Persons of genteel Education, improved Talents, and good Behaviour, the *Dublin* Stage under good Management might soon vie with those of *London*, and, upon some farther Advantages annexed to it, might in time far exceed them.

Fully possessed of these Notions, he resolved to make the Trial; and if he succeeded in his first Attempts, to pursue steadily a regular Plan for the Accomplishment of his whole Design; if not, he determined to give up all Thoughts of the Stage for ever, and to apply himself wholly to the Execution of another Scheme, which was his chief Object in view, and to which he considered the Theatre only as the Road.

Accordingly he made the dangerous Attempt. The Opposition given to it was violent and formidable to the last Degree; the Dangers and Difficulties

attending it were thought to be insurmountable, and therefore he was advised by all his Friends, nay by all the World to give it up. He persevered, he carried his Point. He freed the Stage from the most ignominious state of Slavery. That once done, he no longer doubted of Success in his other Views. The very next Step he took, shewed how sanguine his Expectations were, and the Event proved that they were not ill founded. He expects when he relates the following Fact, to be considered as one of the most romantic Adventurers that the World has produced. His Conduct, no doubt, must have been charged with the highest Temerity, with Madness, if it had not been crowned with Success. For could any one suppose him in his Senses, who should hear him acknowledge, that tho' he knew the Receipts of the Theatre in *Dublin* had seldom amounted to twelve hundred Pounds; that upon the most vigorous Effort ever made, and such a one as probably never could be again, in the very preceding Season, when the Force of *Garrick* and *Barry* was added to his own, and a young favourite Actress joined with them, the whole Receipt of that Season should not have exceeded three thousand four hundred Pounds; yet he entered into Engagements for the next Season to the amount of five thousand Pounds and upwards, upon a Point merely speculative, and which could not possibly have had the smallest Support from Experience. But the Event fully justified him, and shewed he was not mistaken in any of his Calculations. All Ranks of People crowded to a Theatre where the Amusement was on a rational footing, and where they were sure of enjoying it without Interruption. There have been sometimes more than thirty Clergymen in the Pit at a time, many of them Deans and Doctors of Divinity, though formerly none of that Order had ever entered the Doors, unless a few who skulked in the Gallery disguised. Persons venerable for Age, Station, and Character appeared frequently in the Boxes, and

and gave a Sanction to the Reformation. In a short space of Time afterwards many well educated young Men, and Women of good Characters, entered chearfully into a Profession wherein they were no longer liable to Insults; insomuch that the Manager can boast, that during the space of a few Years there were more Gentlemen, who were such both by Birth and a liberal Education, upon his Stage, than all the Theatres in *England* had produced, from the Time of *Booth*, *Wilks*, and *Cibber* to that; as also a greater Number of Actresses, whose Characters were entirely free from Stain. At the Time that he was obliged to quit the Conduct of the Theatre, he was about to give a substantial Proof to the World of the Number of young Gentlemen liberally trained, who at that time belonged to his Company, by playing one of the Comedies of *Terence* in the Original. So rapid was the Progress upon the whole, that in less than four Years time he expended in one Season near eight thousand Pounds on Theatrical Entertainments, and the Receipt of one Season amounted to more than nine thousand Pounds.

In less than two Years after his first beginning the Reformation of the Theatre, he altered the whole System, and overturned every absurd Custom (not indeed without Struggles and Opposition made to every Step) in such a way, and established Order on so firm a Basis, that during the five subsequent Years there was not the least Disturbance, the least Attempt to a Riot; nor was there a more polite or decent Assembly in *Europe*, than what was generally to be found in the Play-house of *Dublin*.

This was an *Æra* which they who frequented the Theatre at that Time will not readily forget. They will often give Accounts of it to their Children and Grand-children, when the Stage shall probably be relapsed into it's former Barbarism, when those Accounts shall be considered as the fond Tales of Age, and

and the Relators only smiled at as, *Laudatores temporis acti.*

Happy as this Time was in many respects, yet it proved to the Manager only a long and dangerous Calm preceding a Tempest. He had made numberless Enemies on account of his first Contest to establish the Stage, whose Rancour was not abated by his having carried his Point. Every Step towards Reformation afterwards added to their Numbers. The Privilege of the Scenes was what the Youth of the Age could not see ravish'd from them without Resentment, and many Attempts to recover it. The irascible Race of Poets whose Pieces were refused, became his inveterate Foes. Many Persons employed by him, who over-rated their own Merits, and thought themselves ill-treated in not finding their Expectations answered, did him privately all ill Offices. Several with whom he was obliged to break on account of their refractory Behaviour, spirited up their Friends against him. The Undertakers of the other publick Diversions, Concerts, Assemblies, &c. clamoured against the exorbitant Growth of the Stage, and were enraged to find that it did not, as formerly, give way occasionally to their respective Interests. His steady Adherence to Rules exasperated many whose unreasonable Requests were not complied with. There were large Bodies of Men his Enemies upon Principles which Prudence will not let him reveal. Add to all these the natural Effects which Envy at the prosperous State of the Stage would produce in the Malevolent, and then the Question, Why Mr. Sheridan had such a Number of Enemies? will easily be solved. To oppose these he had need of many and powerful Friends but his continued Labour in the constant Discharge of his Duty, had shut him out from almost any intercourse with the World. He had set out early in Life with a few steady Friends, whose firm Attachment to him chiefly carried him thro' his first Difficulties.

the space of not many Years he had the irreparable Misfortune to lose many of them by Death, and others by dispersion into different Parts of the World. His reclusive Life, when not at the Theatre, gave him no Opportunity to supply their Places. He had but few Friends left, and very few Acquaintances. Studious of the public Interest only he neglected his own. Before seven Years were elapsed, he became almost a Stranger in the City of his Birth. He had nothing to oppose to Malice but Patience, and to Calumny but the Rectitude of his Life, which yet was known but to few. The uniform Tenour of his Conduct, and his unwearied Application in the Theatre, were too obvious to the Public, to admit of any Attacks upon him in that Capacity; Recourse was therefore had to the most groundless Stories, and shameless Inventions to asperse him in private Life. But all Attempts from the several Quarters mentioned could have done no real Injury to the Manager, had it not been for a new kind of Enemy that arose upon a Principle of a different Nature, that is, a Principle of Self-interest. Many there were who cast a wistful Eye at a Theatre in so flourishing a State, and hoped by supplanting him to reap the Harvest which he had sown. There were Numbers who thought they saw their own Advantage in the Accomplishment of such a Design, amongst whom some who were in the Confidence of the Manager. Some of the chief Actors in *England* wished it Success, as they could not without Regret see themselves excluded from their Summer Expeditions to *Dublin*, which used to fill the Purses of those Visitors, and send them back to *London* loaded with the Praises of the Hospitality and Generosity of this Nation, shewn to all such as *did not chuse to settle amongst them*. A Scheme accordingly was formed; long was it in Agitation, and artfully was it conducted, and kept an impenetrable Secret. Unsuspected Means were used to rip open old Sores, and revive

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dying Enmities in all Quarters. Lyes were invented to heat his Enemies, and cool his Friends, with so much Art as to gain Credit, and at the same time the Persons to whom they were told bound down to Secrecy in the most solemn Manner. One of the worst of Men, but of great Plausibility, was the chief instrument in the Plot. The Manager, wholly attentive to his own Business, knew little of what passed in the World; or had he attempted to look abroad, there were some *Jagos* about him who would have *sealed his Eyes up close as Oak*. The Temper of the Times afforded them at length an Opportunity of putting in Execution a Plot as deep laid, of as black a Nature, against an unsuspecting, innocent Man, as ever Treachery, Perfidy, Ingratitude, and Falshood, under the Direction of the utmost Art and Cunning, have produced in Life, or Invention has displayed in Novel, Romance, or Play. Long had they been working under Ground, whilst the Governor of the Citadel remained in a perfect State of Security, till the very Instant that the Mine was sprung, the Breach made, and Ruin entered. Astounded at first with the suddenness of the Blow, he knew not what to think, or which way to turn him; but it was not long before the whole dark Plot was revealed to him, and the black Scenes, with all their Actors disclosed. In the first warm Emotions of his Heart, roused by the Resentment of conscious Innocence falsely accused; provoked by the treacherous Insolence of his Enemies, who openly dared to lay their Crimes at his Door, and impute their own wicked Contrivances to him; loudly called upon as he was by Truth, by Justice, by a Regard to his own Interests, nay, threatened with immediate Ruin if he did not defend himself, he drew up an Account of the whole Transaction, and placed the Matter in so clear a Light, supported by such undeniable Proofs, as must have opened the Eyes of the Unprejudiced, and called aloud for Reparation to an

innocent Man, suffering under such unparalleled Acts of Violence and Oppression. But when (after having consulted a Friend upon this Occasion, whose Advice had great Weight with him) he reflected in cooler Moments, that he could not exculpate himself without heavy Charges of Guilt against many who were then swayed by Passion, Prejudice, and Party Zeal; that they who, thus blinded, though otherwise well-meaning Men, acted under the Influence of treacherous and designing Persons, must be involved in the same black Crimes with them; and that it was impossible to disclose the whole Truth (so artfully had the Contrivers of the Plot managed it) without inflaming Party Rage to the highest-Degree, he did not take much Time to deliberate how he should act. He locked up the strong, ample Vindication he had drawn up, and contented himself with publishing an unanswerable Defence upon the pretended Grounds of Quarrel, without once touching upon the real Cause. His Motive to this Proceeding is clearly shewn in that Paper; where he says, * ‘ This is all that Mr. *Sheridan* chuses to say in his Vindication; that more might be said will probably be obvious to every Reader. But he has studiously avoided even touching upon Points that might inflame Minds already but too warm. The same Principle which made him sacrifice all Regard to his private Interest, influences him now, rather to run the Risque of being thought culpable, than by too strong a Defence blow up the Fire of Discord, which already rages but too violently in this unhappy Country.’

Hard as his Case was, grievous as was his Loss, and loaded as he was with the most unmerited Reproach and Obloquy, he resolved to withdraw, and wait with Patience for better Days, when Time should bring Truth to Light, and a more pacific Disposition in the Town should enable him to reassume his Undertaking,

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taking, and endeavour to bring his long-concerted Plans to Perfection. Whoever reads the * *Vindication* published by him on this Occasion, may clearly see in what Temper of Mind he wrote it, and what Rule of Conduct he then laid down, which was afterwards demonstrated by his Practice.

Nor will he now, tho' provoked to the uttermost, deviate from his Rule; nor will he now, audaciously as some People persevere in Charges against him, which they know to be groundless, stir up the Embers of Party. Although he has a Tale to tell, so plain a Tale as would at once put them down; supported by such Proofs as would leave no room for doubt; which would redound highly to his Honour, and move Compassion in the most obdurate Breasts. He could wish indeed for their own sakes, for the sake of Peace, that they would for the future be silent; particularly they of the Cabal, who joined in framing the Plot. Mr. *Sheridan* thinks it necessary to acquaint them, that there were some Gentlemen in those Days such furious Zealots in Party, as to lose for a Time their natural Regard to Justice and Humanity. They have since been more calm, their Eyes have been opened. They were let into the Secrets of that Plot: they have since confessed it to him with great Contrition. They have tried by every friendly Act to make him Amends. They were willing, tho' with taking Shame to themselves, to publish the whole, had he permitted it. Perseverance on the part of those Enemies, if productive of any ill Effects, will make them divulge all they know, upon a Principle of common Justice.

As to all such Gentlemen as were misled at that Time, by their Reliance on the Veracity of others, or who took up their Opinions upon common Fame, he humbly entreats of them to consider whether they might not have been misinformed; and whether in Times of Party, Report is always true, or the Characters

racters of Men impartially represented? Let them
 judge of the Manner in which Mr. *Sheridan's* was han-
 dled at that Juncture, by one Specimen. Perhaps there
 is not a Person in *Ireland* who has not heard, and very
 few except those of his intimate Acquaintance, who
 do not still believe, from the general and confident
 Manner in which it was asserted, that Mr. *Sheridan*
 was remarkable for living in great Splendour, Luxu-
 ry, and Extravagance. Now if it be indisputably
 true that the contrary was the Case; that his way of
 living was plain and simple to the last Degree; that
 there were few Tradesmen in Town whose Tables
 were not in the general better supplied; that he ne-
 ver deviated from this Simplicity but when Persons of
 Rank and Fortune honoured him with their Compa-
 ny (which seldom happened, as he had but few Days
 of Leisure) and then never exceeded the Bounds
 which were necessary, according to the Custom of the
 Times, to keep up a due Decorum with respect to
 his Guests; that all Things in his House were of a
 Piece with the Simplicity of his living, having nothing
 ornamental, nothing superfluous there; that in the
 time of his highest living, his utmost Allowance for
 the Support of no small Family, and all domestic Ex-
 pences, was five Guineas *per Week*, and for many
 Years has been reduced to, and now continues at, three
 Guineas *per Week*: when it is considered that all
 these Points were well known to Mr. *Sheridan's* Inti-
 mates, who constantly vouched the Truth of them
 upon their own certain Knowledge, is it to be credit-
 ed that the contrary of all this should obtain almost
 universal Belief? Or can there be a stronger Case in
 point, to shew how slow of Credit Men ought to be, with
 respect to any thing said to the Prejudice of the private
 Character of Persons in publick Station? Their publick
 Conduct all the World are Judges of, and if that be irre-
 proachable, to attack them there would be a fruitless
 Attempt. Their Enemies therefore endeavour to find

out Flaws in their private Life ; or if baffled there, have recourse to Falshood. Malice invents, Detraction propagates, Credulity swallows, and Envy devours the grossest Calumnies. Could it be credited that Malice and Envy pursued the poor Manager to his Hermitage, amongst bleak Hills and barren Mountains, where his whole Time was taken up in laying in Health, and preparing Business for each ensuing Season (on which accounts he chose that Place for his retirement, as being out of the way of Neighbourhood) and that his Conduct there should be represented in the same unfair Light ? Who is there that would not suppose from the Noise made about it that he had built a Palace there ? And yet the whole of his mighty Atchievement amounted to no more than a thatch'd Cabbin, the complete finishing and furnishing of which did not cost him quite four hundred Pounds. The only other Expencc he was at there was the Improvement of his small Patrimony, which he has raised to more than double it's former Value ; and considering the little Skill which he must be supposed to have had in Country Business, it was not done at a dear Rate.

Happy Managers of *London* Theatres ! You are really possessed of lordly Villas, which you visit in splendid Equipages ; you enjoy all the Elegancies as well as Comforts of Life, and the People far from envying, are pleased with the Prosperity of those who administer to their Delights. His has been a barren Lot. He laboured the Ground with the Sweat of his Brow, and found no Reward of his Toils ; the unprofitable Soil did not yield even Praise. And yet there was nothing in all this which was not naturally to have been expected by a Man who knew the World. In *London* the Theatres had been Time out of Mind in a flourishing way, and the Conduct of them had generally been in the Hands of Gentlemen, or respectable Persons. Mr. *Sheridan* was the first who attempt-
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ed to put the Stage here even on a decent footing, and to rescue the Name of Actor from Ignominy. No Wonder therefore that his Labours should be great to weed out rooted Prejudice; or that Envy should increase in proportion to the Success of his Labours. Hard and uncommon indeed have been his Sufferings. He has felt all the ill Effects of Envy, without any of the Sweetens which usually compensate for them. Envy is generally an Attendant on Prosperity, on high Station, or Wealth; he had none of those to allure her to him as her Prey; Prosperity he never knew, his Station might excite Pity at the most, and instead of accumulating Wealth, he was yearly laying out more than he received, on the Improvement of the Theatre, expecting that in time he should find a suitable Return. The Stage indeed prospered for some Time, and the Envy which attended that, was transferred to the Author of it's flourishing State. Hence have arisen most of the Calumnies against him, nor was there one of them, from his first setting out in Life to this Hour, better founded than those which have been discussed above.

There is one Charge however, which at all Events he must disprove; for though *he might live contented without Glory, he cannot bear Shame*. He was in hopes indeed, that having no Foundation in Truth it had long since fallen to the Ground; but since it has been raised up again with great Industry, it must not be suffered to remain as a Monument of Infamy, unless it be to those who erected it. The Charge is, 'That the Manager studiously sought a Cause of Dispute, in order to set the Parties together by the Ears in his House, and that he did this with a view to ingratiate himself with the Government, and in case he should be ruined by it, to throw himself upon them for Support.'

Tho' nothing could be conceived more absurd than this Charge, nor more inconsistent with the whole

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Tenour of the Manager's Conduct and Character, as his utmost Endeavours had been used to keep all Party Matters from the Theatre (and in Fact he fell a Sacrifice to his steady Perseverance in that Point) tho' nothing less than Lunacy or Idiotism could account for so strange an Attempt, at a Time when the Theatre began to fill every Night, on account of the Prorogation of the Parliament, whose late sittings, together with the Attention paid to their Proceedings by all Ranks of People, had rendered the Theatre unfrequented during the former Part of the Season, and when alone he could hope to make up his Loss; at a Time when he was under Engagements for considerable Sums during the remainder of the Season, which he was bound at all Events to make good; yet such was the Temper of the Times, that this Report was industriously propagated, and believed by many. He thought indeed it's glaring Absurdity would not suffer it to be of long duration, but that, like other Lies of the Day, when the Turn was served, it would have been consigned to Oblivion. To disprove it, therefore, tho' it might be done by incontestible Arguments, there needs only to give a Narrative of his Behaviour on this Occasion.

When Mr. *Sheridan* was driven from the Theatre, with immense Loss, the Earl of *Shelburne*, to whom he had always been much indebted for his Countenance and Interest, applied to the Lord Lieutenant on his behalf (tho' entirely without his Knowledge) and expressed himself in the warmest Manner, that he thought the Government bound to make good the Damages sustained by the Manager of the Theatre-Royal on this Occasion; and at the same time was good enough to urge it as a Point that would be considered as a particular Favour on his own account. There were several others of powerful Influence who appeared in his behalf, tho' without his Privity. Mr. *Sheridan* received an Intimation privately, that there was

was an Intention of applying for a King's Letter for a thousand Pounds, to make good his present Damages, and also to settle a Pension of three hundred Pounds a Year upon him. He immediately waited on the Duke of *Dorset*, and begged to know if such a Point were in agitation. The Duke confirmed it, and at the same time added these remarkable Words, ' Mr. *Sheridan*, you are not at all obliged to me on this Occasion, for tho' from my personal Regard to you I should at all times be willing to serve you, yet I am to tell you that you have so strong an Interest, and such powerful Friends with me as I cannot refuse.' Mr. *Sheridan* then earnestly begged that the Affair might proceed no farther, for that he was determined that he would not on any account receive a Shilling from the Government on this Occasion. The Reasons which he gave for this his Resolution he will not here repeat, lest he should be charged, as usual, with being fond of sounding his own Praise. But there was one Point he chiefly urged, ' That as an unblemished Character was to him a Matter of more Value than any worldly Gain, he would never by any Act of his confirm the malicious Charge made against him by his Enemies, which the Acceptance of the smallest Matter from the Government would certainly do, and fix an indelible Stain upon him.'

On the same account, when the Duke afterwards was about to subscribe largely, to the four Plays which were to have been performed, in order that the Receipts of them might be employed in supplying new Scenes, in the room of those which had been destroyed, Mr. *Sheridan* again requested that he would not do it. And indeed from that Hour to this, neither from the Court, nor any other Quarter, has he received one Shilling Reparation for his immense Damages and Losses.

He has not laid open this Matter merely for his own Justification, but at the same time to remove all
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Imputations which have been thrown out with respect to the Conduct of the then Lord Lieutenant. It is to be observed, that this Charge was more artfully contrived, than appears at first sight. It was a two-edged Sword, and cut both ways. The first Point in view was, by instilling a Suspicion of Mr. *Sheridan's* Motives, to prevent the Duke from doing any thing for him. The second was, if that Bait took, afterwards to raise a Clamour against the Duke, for having deserted a Man who was universally supposed to be ruined on his account. Mr. *Sheridan* thinks himself therefore bound in Justice to declare, that the Duke of *Dorset* behaved towards him with the utmost Humanity and Tenderness ; that he desired immediately an Estimate of his Losses and Damages might be laid before him ; and that he was ready to make him ample Amends for all, if Mr. *Sheridan* would have consented to it. And indeed when it is consider'd that the Manager of a Theatre-Royal, acting immediately under the King's Patent, was driven by Violence from his Post ; his Freehold, upon which he had expended more than eight thousand Pounds, forced out of his Hands ; his House set on Fire, his Property torn to Pieces, and that under these hard Circumstances, he was absolutely precluded from any Benefit of the Law ; there can hardly be a Case shewn which more loudly called upon the Justice, not Generosity of the Government, to protect and save from Ruin a Man whose only Crime was the doing his Duty. And if upon Application he had been refused such Justice, he knows no Reason why he should have been silent on the Occasion, and not rather have been loud in his Complaints. It is certain that so circumstanced he might have been received with open Arms by the opposite Party, not only to wipe away the Stain of such an Act of Violence committed by the avowed Assertors of Liberty, but to throw a Discredit on the other Side. A Gentleman of Distinction, of known Worth and Honour, can testify

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what Commissions he was charged with to Mr. *Sheridan* upon this Head, by some eminent Personages; upon what easy Terms he might have been reinstated; and what uncommon Pains that Gentleman took, in Conjunction with many others, to persuade Mr. *Sheridan* into this Measure, as considering it the most advantageous to his Interest. He knows well with what Steadiness Mr. *Sheridan* adhered to his Principle, which may be seen in his *Vindication*, * viz. ' That his Resolution was, never to continue longer in the Management of the Theatre than he could support it under a Regulation, established at a vast Expence of Money, and after one of the strongest Contests ever known in any Country upon a like Occasion. He was now sorry to say that the Hour was come, when he could no longer maintain the Stage upon a footing which all the World had approved of for many Years, and that therefore he was determined to withdraw.'

If any one is at a Loss to know what that Principle is, he answers, it is that divine Principle impressed upon our Natures, without which Mankind are degraded below Brutes; without the Enjoyment of which no rational Pleasure or Happiness could subsist in this World—LIBERTY. He had planted it in the Soil of Slavery, the Theatre, where for some Years it flourished. He had establish'd the only FREE Stage ever remembered in these Kingdoms. Whilst it remained so; whilst the Actors were considered as on a common footing with the rest of the Subjects of the King of *Great-Britain*, he did not think himself dishonoured by his Station. But he scorned to be at the Head of Slaves, or to assist in raising a Nursery of Slaves, which the Theatre must perpetually be upon any other Establishment than that which had been made, with immense Hazard, Labour, and Expence.

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His Idea of a State of Liberty, is that of a State wherein the Lives and Properties of all Subjects are equally under the Protection of the Laws; wherein no Man shall be restrained from saying or doing any thing that is consistent with Reason and Truth; nor be compelled to say or to do any thing contrary to the Conviction of his Mind. Let the State in which Mr. *Sheridan* found himself, on the memorable Night of the Subversion of the Theatre, be compared with this Definition, and see whether it is to be referred to that of Freedom or Vassalage. He could find no Protection from the Laws, either for his Life or Property; and he was most unreasonably called upon both to say and do whatever an enraged Multitude pleased, or to have his Brains beat out. And had he acquiesced in their Demands, the Condition of his being permitted to enjoy his Property for the future, must have been, that of being always ready to say and do whatever an enraged Multitude should please to command, against all Rules of civil Order and Government. Surely no one of any Spirit but would have preferred the worst of Deaths, to Life upon such Terms.

Tho' the Facts already mention'd sufficiently evince the Falshood of the Charge against him, yet as it is the only one upon which his Enemies seem to have built with any Confidence, too much cannot be said to elucidate his Principles; to shew that they were confirmed by his Actions; and that his Conduct upon the whole deserved the reverse of Blame. Supposing that Mr. *Sheridan* had any View of obtaining Preference from the Government, the worst of his Enemies will allow that could he have obtained it, and at the same time have kept the Theatre in his own Hands, he must have been a perfect Idiot wantonly to have sacrificed his Interests in the latter, which was by much the larger Stake, without at all promoting the former,

He must now therefore acquaint the World, that there were not many private Persons in this Kingdom who could have made a stronger Interest with the Duke of *Dorset*, if that had been his Point in view, than Mr. *Sheridan*; nor was there perhaps any one more invited, and urged to it. His Grace, both the first and second time of his Residence here, during his last Administration, was pleased to shew him particular Marks of his Regard. Besides many general Offers of Service, three several times he importuned him in the most cordial Manner to say whether he had any thing to ask for himself, and assured him that if he pointed out the way, he should find in him the greatest readiness to serve him. Nor was this Behaviour at all to be wondered at in a Lord Lieutenant, who, during his former Government, had given an Employment unasked to a very indifferent Comedian, but then reckoned the best of his Time. Mr. *Sheridan's* constant Answer was, after due Expressions of Thankfulness, that he had nothing to ask; and at the same time acquainted his Grace, that there was but one Employment which could possibly fall to the Lot of a Person in his Sphere, that he would accept of, the Post of Master of the Revels; and that only because it would give him more Power to serve the Public in his Station. But as there were then two Names in the Patent, he could not have the most distant Hope of it. If this Account should startle the Belief of those who hunt after Employments as their only Resource, Mr. *Sheridan* begs Leave to remind them that it was not his Case; he had it in his Power to provide for himself much better than the Government could. He had set out in Life upon certain Principles, early imbibed from his great Master *Swift*, which would not suffer him to think of such a Course. Amongst these, one of the foremost was Independence, without which there could be no Liberty. By Independence he means

only a Reliance upon a Man's self, and his own Talents and Labours, for his Support and Advancement in Life; for absolute Independence belongs not to human Beings. He was in the prosecution of a Scheme, which was likely to end in raising a considerable Fortune to himself, and his Family. He was in a Post which it was in his Power to make at any time sufficiently lucrative, whenever he should think it necessary to turn his Thoughts that way. Thus circumstanced, he never thought it worth his while to be tied up by any Obligation from acting as he should think proper. Nor did he imagine it his Interest, by accepting of any small Matter from the Government, to instil Jealousy into the People of a partial Conduct in a Post, which of all others required the utmost freedom from Suspicions of that Sort, to make it easy and beneficial to the Possessor. Tho' they who know not the Value of such a Sort of Independence; tho' they who know not how sweet the Bread is which is earned with the Sweat of one's own Brow, may not have any Faith in Principles of this Sort, yet surely they will give Credit to a Man upon their own favourite Maxim, that of Self-interest.

That such were his Sentiments, that such was his Conduct he can call upon an uncontrovertible Witness to prove; he means Mr. *Bale*, private Secretary to the Duke of *Dorset* during his last Administration, and who deservedly enjoyed the highest Degree of his Confidence. Mr. *Sheridan* had the good Fortune to be much in his Favour. The Singularity of Mr. *Bale's* Character first made him wish for an Acquaintance with him. Acquaintance soon ripened into Esteem, into Friendship. It was a most singular Delight to him to pass as many Hours as he could with a Man, who, though he had spent his whole Life in a Court, retained all the Simplicity of Manners, the Candour, the Integrity, the Bluntness, and true Humanity of a plain *English* Country Gentleman. To him

him Mr. *Sheridan's* whole Heart was open, and he well knows how disinterested he was both in his Views and Conduct.

After the sudden and violent Blow given to his Fortunes, which at that time put an End to all his Views in this Kingdom, let Mr. *Sheridan's* Conduct to this Hour be examined, and let it be seen whether it has been uniform, and consistent with the Principles which before governed his Actions.

The Wishes of his Friends were, when he left this Kingdom, that the Theatre might sink to the lowest ebb for Reasons sufficiently obvious. But Mr. *Sheridan* thought otherwise; he was determined to use his utmost Endeavours to have it supported in as high a State as possible during his Absence. This made him decline some very advantageous Overtures made to him by Mr. *Barry*, on his Arrival in *London*, to join Forces with him at *Covent-garden*. He made a great Sacrifice to his own Interests on this Occasion; but as he knew no body that could support the *Dublin* Stage at that time but Mr. *Barry*, he entered into a precipitate Agreement with Mr. *Rich*, which obliged that Performer to set out for *Ireland*. * Whilst he was in *London*, he did every thing to assist those who had taken the Theatre from him, towards making the Entertainment as good as possible during his Absence. Particularly, there was no Step taken by Mr. *Victor* without his Privy; and he readily concurred with him in Opinion, that upon Mr. *Barry's* return, Mr. *Mossop's* Presence would be absolutely necessary, and joined then in Measures to secure an Engagement with him for the following Season. Upon some remarkable Events, as soon as the least Dawn appeared of his being able to return with any Prospect of Success, he determined to reassume his Employment; and in order to secure as good Entertainment to the Town as possible, he waited on Mr. *Barry* in Company

* Vid. Appendix.

pany with a Gentleman, a common Friend to both, and made him Overtures of all Kinds to engage him for the next Season in the Undertaking; at the same time telling him that his Business to *Ireland* was only to endeavour to establish the Theatre once more on a good footing; that he should not continue on the Stage above a Year or two, at the most, and in that Case it should be Mr. Barry's own Fault if his Station there were not as eligible as he could wish. Mr. Barry did not at first seem to relish the Proposal. He mentioned a Design which his Friends had of erecting a Theatre for him. To which Mr. *Sheridan* made many unanswerable Objections, and shewed clearly that such a Scheme was incompatible with Mr. Barry's true Interest. Mr. *Sheridan* then proposed either to engage him at a certain Salary, or to admit him to a Share of the Profits, for the ensuing Season, and afterwards to let the Theatre to him. Before they parted Mr. Barry seemed inclined to come into some one of these Proposals; promised to consider of the Point, and in a few Days to call on Mr. *Sheridan* and let him know the Result of his Thoughts. But he neither called, nor ever afterwards spoke to Mr. *Sheridan* on the Subject.

He was in Hopes on his Return to *Ireland* that he should have found his Opponents in a Disposition to encourage him, and make him Reparation for the Injuries they had done him, and the Damages so undeservedly sustained on his Part; especially as Party Rage had in a great measure subsided, and they had Time coolly to reflect on what they had done, and he had suffered. But in this he gave a fresh Instance of his Ignorance of the World, in not considering that they who injure never forgive. His interested Enemies, seeing their Designs upon the *Irish* Theatre likely to be frustrated by his Return, used every Art to keep up the former Ill-will and Animosity against him. Nay, with such Industry was it propagated

gated in *London*, that he never would be permitted to appear again on the Stage here, that no Performers of any Consequence would venture to enter into an Engagement with him, till after the Trial had been made. The few that did listen to him, made such exorbitant Demands as must have ruined the Undertaker had he come into their Measures; some of them asking twice and some thrice the Salary which they could get in *London*. In this Dilemma he contracted with *Maranesi* and *Bugiani*, confessedly some of the best Dancers in *Europe*, at a certain Expence to them and their Attendants of a thousand Pounds. He also engaged Mr. *Lee* upon Character, having never seen his Performance, at the large Salary of four hundred Pounds; the Town well knows how much he was disappointed in him. Under the most disadvantageous Circumstances however did he embark in the hazardous Enterprize. The Emptiness of the Town, the extreme Poverty of the People thro' publick Calamities, the Scarcity of Provisions almost to Famine, the want of a capital Actress, and an extraordinary Degree of Licentiousness; which through a Spirit of Party had for three Years infested the Theatre, and banished many of the Sober, the Sensible, the Grave, and the Judicious (formerly it's chief Support) from the Entertainment; all these together gave the Undertaking a frightful Aspect. At this alarming Juncture a Proposition was made to him by some bold Adventurers, who would rather rule over a wretched, than be Subjects in a flourishing Stage, to take the Theatre from him, upon such Terms, as had he regarded nothing but his own Interest, he would readily have embraced. But when he reflected, that the Theatre would in that Case fall into such Hands as would soon destroy it, and reduce it in a few Years to the wretched State in which he found it, he determined to make one Effort more to accomplish a Point, which had cost him the Labour

of

of his best Years, and which therefore he could not give up without the utmost Reluctance ; a Point which appeared to him to be of great Consequence to the Public, and which if it succeeded might still repay his many Risques and Labours.

After the immense Loss which he had sustained ; after so convincing a Proof given how precarious his Tenure was, without Resources, broken in his Fortune, persecuted by his Enemies, amidst the general Despondency and Fears of those who wished him well, he not only opened the Theatre, but has had the Courage since to lay out upwards of a thousand Pounds upon new Scenery, and Supplies for the Wardrobe, which had been much abused during his Absence.

Nor was this all ; he determined, though at the Hazard of making no Profit that Season, to put an End to all Disturbances, and restore Peace and Decency to the Theatre by one single Stroke ; which was by converting the Upper Gallery into Boxes, at the Price of Half a Crown for the Admission of each Person. The ill Consequences arising from this Change he foresaw, but not in so great a Degree as they proved. For as all Things now-a-days are chiefly governed by Fashion, Novelty and Whim drew the Ladies, and consequently the Gentlemen, in such Numbers to the upper Boxes, that those below were in a great measure deserted, and the Pit much thinned of course. The Loss which the Manager sustained on this account was great ; but as he considered the chief Business of that Season to be the Reformation of Abuses, and the laying a good Foundation for the future Prosperity of the Stage, he thought those Points could not be too soon brought to bear, or purchased at too dear a Rate. Peace and Order were indeed suddenly and wonderfully restored ; and the Theatre once more became, and has ever since continued, a quiet Place of Entertainment.

nor can any other Theatre in these Realms, boast of such decent and polite Behaviour in the Audiences.

Thus far an Account has been given of the most material Events and Transactions, during Mr. *Sheridan's* Management of the Theatre-Royal in *Dublin*. It is but fair that he should be judged of by his Actions. There are a Series of Facts produced in Justification of his Conduct; many of those Facts are of publick Notoriety, and for the Truth of the rest, Men of undoubted Integrity and Honour have been appealed to. Those Facts sufficiently point out the Principles by which his Conduct was chiefly regulated; nor can it be accounted for upon any other but *A Love of Liberty, and a Love of the Public*. He confesses it was his Misfortune to be early tinged with these exploded Notions, by poring too much upon some antiquated Books, wherein those old-fashioned Principles were inculcated, apparently with great Strength of Reason, set off by the most beautiful and energetic Expression. Most of his Misfortunes and Difficulties in Life have been owing to the Impression they made on him. He was so possessed with the Notion of Liberty, that he was mad enough to prove at the Hazard of his Life and Fortune, that an Actor was not a Slave, but was under the Protection of the Laws, and enjoy'd the common Privileges and Rights of a *British* Subject. In spite of the universal Opinion against him, he was Fool enough to think that a Company of Slaves could never afford proper Entertainment to a free Audience; and that Sentiments of Liberty could never come with any Force from a servile Tongue. Whilst the wiser Multitude were of a different way of thinking, his Conduct upon this Principle gave continual Offence; for the same Word or Act which in every other Subject would have been considered as a just Assertion of their Rights, was looked upon in him as the Effect of Arrogance and Presumption. His faithful Discharge of his

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Duty

Duty to the Public too brought much Ill-will upon him. The Regulations he established, and his strict Adherence to them, tho' their good Effects were sensibly felt by the Public in general, yet did they not produce to him any particular Friends; whereas all they whose Inclinations, whose Interest, or whose Pride were thwarted or piqued by them, became his personal Enemies.

Convinced as he is, however, of what Detriment these Principles have been to him, yet such is the Force of early Prejudice, that he would not wish to substitute any others in their room; nay so infatuated is he, that he sincerely hopes they may stick by him in their full Force to the Hour of his Death; altho' he is certain that it is not the way to *die a rich Man*. All this may seem very strange, but however it will not appear altogether irrational, when he confesses that he really and truly believes in a future State of Rewards and Punishments; and that therefore all the Goods of this Life are Bawbles in comparison of a conscious Rectitude of Conduct; and that no Man possessed of every Delight this World can afford, without further Expectations, feels any thing like the Happiness of the Man struggling with Difficulties here, and looking through the Opticks of a clear Conscience, at a blessed Immortality. A good Conscience is such a Bosom Friend, such a Comforter in Adversity, such a pleasing Companion in Prosperity, such a Tower of Strength against all the Assaults of Fortune, such a celestial Coat of Mail against the envenom'd Darts of Malice and Envy, that whoever is possessed of it, let him not part with it for the World's Wealth. Such a Man may see Multitudes of Enemies foaming against him, and look down on them with Pity; such a Man may smile at all the impuissant Efforts of black Scandal and bold Calumny, when he can fairly stand forth and challenge the World to prove that ever once in his Life he was guilty of an unjust, dishonest, or dishonourable Action.

Having

Having thus cleared away the Mists of Prejudice, it is time to offer to the impartial Eye of the Public, some Considerations on the present critical and dangerous State of the Stage in *Ireland*. That they may have their due Weight, it will be necessary to resume the Account of the Theatre where Mr. *Sheridan* was left, with a Spirit which must be deemed not a little romantic, exerting his utmost Endeavours to rebuild the ruined Stage, under such amazing Difficulties and Obstacles, as might be thought by most Men to be unsurmountable.

The general Applause with which he was received by the Town, in spite of all Reports and Endeavours to the contrary; the suddenness with which he restored Peace and Order to the Theatre; the rapid Progress which he was making towards re-establishing it upon its former Basis; and above all, the Knowledge they had of his Steadiness and Resolution in the Pursuit and Accomplishment of any Point which he undertook, made his interested Enemies despair of ever getting again a footing on the *Dublin Stage*, unless another House were set up in Opposition to him. In order that this Point may be the more clearly understood, it will be necessary to shew who those interested Enemies were. In the first Place, several of the principal Performers in *England*, who had been shut out from their profitable Summer Expeditions, were certain that whilst the Stage was under his Influence they could never be admitted on it unless they passed the Winter Season here, and therefore would readily lend an helping Hand towards erecting another House. In the next Place, there were several Performers, who on account of a turbulent and ungovernable Spirit, or an overweening Conceit of their own Abilities, and over-rated Merit, had at different Times belonged to all the different Theatres, and from the Experience of the Mischief they did, had by common Consent been shut out from all: These had no Hopes of ever being received again in an estab-

blished Theatre, unless there were a new one erected in *Dublin*, and therefore were vigilant and active Instruments to bring that Point to bear. To these were added Numbers who had a Prospect of private Gain by the Undertaking. Amongst the numerous Enemies of the Manager, they found no Difficulty to raise a Cry, in which all the Young and the Giddy joined, who hoped by this Means to recover their much regretted, long lost Liberty of the Scenes. The Desire of Novelty, and a thousand Stories of the prodigious Entertainment they were to expect, greedily swallowed, however absurd and incredible, drew in Numbers to the Party. The Clamour once raised, it was as usual pronounced the Voice of the Public; whilst good Sense and Forecast looked with Pity on the fantastic Folly of the grown-up Children of the World, ever fond of new Bawbles, and shuddered at the dreadful Consequences which must flow from the Attempt. Yet all this Multitude and their Noise could have availed nothing without a Chief who must also be an Actor of Eminence, to excite Expectation in the People. The Offer of building a Theatre for him when he was in *Ireland*, afforded many specious Arguments to several designing Men to persuade Mr. *Barry* to put himself at the Head of the Undertaking. Unfortunately for him, and for the Peace of the City they prevailed. The Juncture appeared favourable to them. The last Season, for the Reasons mentioned before, had not proved a profitable one, and they were in Hopes from the very Cry of a new House, which they did not scruple to assert in the strongest Manner should be opened this Winter, to distress the Manager in such a manner as that no one would engage with him for this Season, which must end in his Ruin, and cut off all Possibility of future Opposition from that Quarter.

As soon as Mr. *Sheridan* received certain Intelligence that such a Design was in agitation, he immediately begged of Mr. *Victor* to go to *London*, with

all possible Dispatch, and try by all Means to divert Mr. *Barry* from so strange a Course. He had Instructions to repeat the Proposals to him before mentioned, either a certain Salary larger than ever he received, or a Share of the Profits, with an Assurance that if he chose it the House should be afterwards let to him in preference to all others. Mr. *Barry* acknowledged that he could not expect or desire fairer Terms, but that the Proposal came too late, as he had already signed Articles. With whom those Articles were signed remains still a Secret; 'tis certain that the Lease of *Crow-street* House was not signed till a long time afterwards. However this Answer might do with respect to the Proposal carried over by Mr. *Victor*, yet it can have no weight with respect to the same Proposal made by Mr. *Sheridan* in Person to Mr. *Barry* the Year before, in Presence of a Gentleman, as above recited; nor can it justify his entering into such an unprovoked Opposition, after such fair and friendly Offers made on Mr. *Sheridan's* Part. Had Mr. *Sheridan* shut the Theatre against him, and refused him Entrance into it on any Terms, he and his Friends might have had some Reason to clamour, to cry out against a Monopoly, and to use their Endeavours to erect another Theatre for him; but when there was one already open to him upon his own Terms, to which he was earnestly invited; when it was clearly the Interest of the Town that they should be together in order to encrease their Entertainment, (as surely all will allow that Mr. *Barry* and Mr. *Sheridan* performing in the same Play, might probably afford more Satisfaction to an Audience than either could do separately) some good Reason ought to be assigned to the Public for this wanton Attempt, which in the End may destroy their Diversion, create much ill Blood, keep alive old Party Feuds, excite new ones, and prove a continual Fountain of Discord. Nor can Mr. *Sheridan* help thinking, that after having laboured so many Years in his native Country,

Country, to render the Stage prosperous, whilst Mr. *Barry* chose a foreign Service ; after having met with a Blow that destroyed all his Hopes ; when he was struggling with immense Difficulties to recover what he had lost ; he cannot help thinking that common Humanity should rather have induced Mr. *Barry* to stretch out a sought-for Hand to raise him up, than to join with his Enemies to trample a fallen Man under Foot. Mr. *Barry* knows well that Mr. *Sheridan* did not deserve this at his Hands.

The only Reason hitherto assigned why Mr. *Barry* did not chuse to be concerned in the Theatre of *Smock-alley* was the great Burthen upon it, by means of the Number of Subscribers who have free Tickets. Let this Argument be fairly canvassed, and see whether that in *Crow-street* is not likely to lie under a greater Burthen on that very score. Mr. *Barry's* first Subscription was that of twenty at fifty Pounds apiece, who are each of them to have a free Ticket, and five *per Cent.* for their Money ; the Security to be the Theatre itself, previous to any other Demand. A free Ticket at the lowest Valuation is worth ten Guineas for each Season, if the Theatre flourishes. Thus the original Subscribers, if the House should succeed, will receive twenty seven Pounds fifteen Shillings *per Cent.* Interest. The second Subscription was of twenty Persons at twenty five Pounds each, upon Mr. *Barry's* personal Security, each to have a free Ticket till they were paid off. Here the Interest is greatly increased, for a free Ticket at the same Value, to one who only advances twenty five Pounds, is very near fifty *per Cent.* Interest. Thus to raise fifteen hundred Pounds only there are already forty free Tickets affixed to *Crow-street* House ; and if it be true that less than six thousand Pounds will not complete the Theatre, and that the Money must be raised in the same way (as there is a third Subscription now soliciting) the Number of free Tickets will in the same Proportion amount to one hundred

and

and sixty; whereas those in the united Theatres of *Aungier-street* and *Smock-alley* amount to but fifty-two. The World will no doubt be surprized at seeing the true State of the Case, after the many Puffs in the News-papers (calculated for the Meridian of *London*) of the great Encouragement given to Mr. *Barry's* Undertaking, and the readiness with which the Subscription was filled, without mentioning the Terms. Whereas it is well known here, that even upon those hard Terms it was with the utmost Difficulty, by Interest, Importunity, and earnest Sollicitation that the Names were obtained to make up the Appearance of that small Subscription. Mr. *Barry* no doubt must have been shocked himself, both at the Terms, and the Difficulty of compassing the Point even on those Terms. When he was here before, many had earnestly pressed him to erect another House, and were profuse of Promises on the Occasion. But he was ignorant of their Motive. He did not know that they were then spurred on by a Spirit of Party, which afterwards vanishing, left them to the Use of their cooler Judgment. He expected to have found all in the same Disposition that he left them; and so sanguine was he in his Hopes, that on his first coming over he declared his Intentions of only passing ten Days here at the utmost. He thought, like *Pompey*, he had nothing to do but to stamp with his Foot, and so many full Purse would instantly appear. But he found himself afterwards necessitated to stay more than two Months. His Situation indeed was disagreeable enough; disappointed in his Expectations, except by a few Gentlemen, who kept their Words against their better Judgments, he had no Alternative but either to give up the Project, and return to *London*, or to pursue it at all Hazards. To think of the former was intolerable, after the Noise made about it in *London*, and might be prejudicial to his Interests there. The latter therefore was submitted to. Instead of a Theatre which was to have been a voluntary

rary Gift to him, free from Incumbrances, he found himself pinned down to an hard Bargain. It is true, some of the Gentlemen who subscribed, acted from generous Motives, and are above thinking of any little advantage to themselves; but it is very clear that they who made the Contract, had their own Interest much more in view than Mr. Barry's. Upon the whole, he had no Part to chuse but to put the best Face on the Matter, and on his return to *London* to let People suppose that all Things went on as he could wish. But can these Persons who made so hard a Contract with him, suppose that he will think himself obliged to them? Do they imagine he will ever visit them upon such Terms, except when his own Convenience calls him? Have they tied him down to an Attendance on that Theatre for any Term of Years? No, how could they have the Face to ask it upon such sort of Encouragement? Discouragement rather! and without him what mighty Prospect of Gain are they likely to have under Mr. *Macklin's* Direction? The first twenty Subscribers indeed may say we are safe enough at all Events, and let the rest look to themselves.

It may be Matter of Wonder that in this Dilemma Mr. *Barry* did not rather chuse to close with Mr. *Sheridan's* Proposal, as the most eligible of the two; but it is to be observed that the Lease for *Crow-street* had been sign'd, a Bond for 500*l.* Fine passed, and several Engagements enter'd into before he left *London*, or could divine that the Event would fall so short of his warm Expectations. Besides, as Mr. *Sheridan* was peremptory against any sort of Connection with *Macklin*, Mr. *Barry* was so strongly bound there that no separate Agreement could be made. Some of the Motives which induced him to think of the Scheme at all may be seen from his own frank Account of it, given to Mr. *Victor* without reserve, on their first Interview in *London*, and transmitted that very Night to Mr. *Sheridan* in the following Words,

“ I have

I have seen Mr. *Barry* this Day. When alone he told me the following frank Story. That he had several Conversations with *Sowdon* in *London*, about *Crow street House*. That he told him he did not want his Money, and would not have it, as his Friends in *Dublin*, were ready to advance what was wanted on Subscription. Upon which *Sowdon* offered himself to go over to *Dublin*, as his Agent, to act in the best Manner he could for him. That Mr. *Mullock* had a Letter of Attorney from him, to Sign with *Johnson* in the Name of *Barry* only. That he had long proposed the having an House of his own in *Dublin*, to occupy either in Summer or Winter, as best suited his Affairs; and when he was employed in *London* he could afford to lock it up, as the Rent (Interest included) would not be much over one hundred pounds per Ann. and farther advised, that *Woffington*, *Macklin's* whole Family, *Shuter*, *Woodward*, &c. were ready to come over with him and *Noffiter*, if the House could be made ready for them this Summer; but by his last Letters he hears it cannot till *October*.

From this Answer of Mr. *Barry's* to the Proposal made him, it is evident that he had no View in having a Theatre in his own Country, but to use it by way of a Lodge to retire to upon particular Occasions, whilst *London* was to be his chief Residence. It shall hereafter be proved, that whatever private Benefit might accrue to Mr. *Barry* from such a possession, it must be attended with the total destruction of the Entertainment in this City, and that is rather too great a Sacrifice to be made to the Interest of any one Man.

The only Argument offered on Mr. *Barry's* Side, for his not chusing to be concerned in the established

THEATRE in *Dublin*, on any Terms whatsoever having been considered ; and his true Motives for wishing rather to have another erected for *his own sole Use and Benefit*, having been laid open from *his own Lips*, it will be necessary to consider what plausible Arguments were made use of to the Public, to persuade them that the Scheme was not calculated to serve private Interest, but for the general Good, and improvement of their Entertainment. For as they well knew that the Town was perfectly satisfied for many Years, and with just Reason, with the wonderfully improved State of the Stage, they could have no hopes of engaging their consent or assistance to any change, unless they could make it appear, that it must necessarily be for the better. To effect this there were but two Ways ; one was by specious Arguments, to make People believe, that two Theatres would greatly mend the State of their Diversions, and by the lately, much improved Art of Puffing, to promise such vast Entertainment, and such a variety of it, as it was not possible in the Nature of Things that they could make good. The next was, by falshood and falshood, to persuade the ignorant and credulous ; and by Ridicule and Satyr to gain over the Laughters and the Envious, to joyn in a cry, that the State of the Diversion could not possibly be worse, and that therefore any Change must be for the better. Both these Methods they tried : With what colour of Reason or Truth shall be now examined. As to the first, they revived the old trite topic, of the good Effects of Emulation in such a Case, which has been long since exploded, both by Reason and Experience. To be convinced of this, there needs only to look over a few of the first Pages of the Appendix*, in or

† V.d. Appendix, P. 1, 2, 3, &c.

der to see the Sentiments of a Man upon this Head, whose long Experience must give great Weight to his Authority, and whose Reasonings are unanswerable. Indeed before their Arguments can be at all allowed, they seem to forget that it is necessary first, to shew, that *Dublin* is able to support two Theatres : But if the direct contrary be true, the emulation they talk of can only be productive of great Mischief, and must end in the destruction of the Entertainment. *Gibber* has clearly shewn, in those Passages, extracted from him, (vid. Appen.) That this was the chief Source of the Disorders of the *London* Stage ; and we well know that it brought that of *Dublin* to the most deplorable State. The Point has been attempted several Times in *Dublin* ; with what Success may be seen in *Chetwood's* History of the Stage (b) It never was on a tolerable Footing when there was more than one. It made a shift to subsist in the Time of old *Ashbury*, and afterwards of *Tom Elrington* ; but the instant two were set up, they destroyed each other. Nor need it be wondered at here when the same Fates always attended the same attempts in *London*. We see there, that the Managers of the most successful Companies were often obliged to pay their Actors, but half their stipulated Terms. And during the Opposition carried on between the Theatres of *Mungier-street* and *Smock-alley* ; it is well known that the poor Actors have often been for several Months, without receiving a Shilling Subsistence ; low and wretched as it was at that Time. *Mr. Isaac Sparks*, who at that Time had a Salary of only twelve Shillings per Week, was paid at one Time an Arrear of sixteen pounds ; the others in the same Proportion. It is well worth observing, that in the populous, and opulent City of *London*, when two excellent Companies were acting against each other, they were obliged to

(b) Vid Appen. P. 12, &c.

to have recourse to the same Method; thus vouched by old *Cibber*: ' But against this Evil the provident Parentees, had found out a Relief, which the new House was not yet Masters of, viz. never to pay their People, when the Money did not come in; nor then neither, but in such proportions as suited their Conveniency. I myself was one of the many who for six acting Weeks together, never received one Day's pay; and for some Years after, seldom had above half our nominal Salaries: But to the best of my Memory, the Finances of the other House, held it not above one Season more, before they were reduced to the same Expedient of making the like scanty Payments.'

' Such was the Distress, and Fortune of both these Companies, since their division from the *Theatre-Royal*; either working at half Wages, or by alternate Successes, intercepting the Bread from one another's Mouths; irreconcilable Enemies, yet without hope of relief, from a Victory on either Side; sometimes both Parties reduced, and yet each supporting their Spirits, by seeing the other under the same Calamity.'

Here we have an admirable Picture of the excellent Effects of Theatrical emulation; which produced the same Fruits here only of a more crabbed and wretched Kind. Indeed the chief emulation likely to be excited, would be a contest between the undertakers, who should bid highest for the Actors; and they for want of Forecast, or allured by the hopes of present Gain, might readily embrace the best Offer, without considering that such Terms could not be made good, but by the Ruin of the Undertakers. It is worth observing how different the State of

the Stage has been since there was but one House. Formerly neither Theatre could afford to run the Risque of more than a thousand or twelve hundred Pounds for the whole Expence of the Entertainment, and on every Attempt to exceed it were sure to run out. The present Manager has laid out, at different Times, from six to eight thousand Pounds in a Season. Instead of those long Arrears, most of which were never paid (except when the Proprietors of *Aungier-street* took the Conduct into their own Hands) every Saturday saw the weekly Salary of each Person discharged at the Treasurer's Office. And the Books of that Office will shew, *That at the Close of the Account last Saturday, there was not a Demand upon him of any Performer whatsoever, from his first undertaking the Management (twelve Years since) to that Hour, left unsatisfied.*

It will be said, that *Dublin* is not now in the same Condition it was formerly; that it is much increased in point of Inhabitants and Wealth; and therefore, tho' it could not formerly support two Play-houses it may do it now. But there ought to be first some Proof given, that it is, at this Day, well able to support one, at the present advanced Prices paid to Performers. If the Stage, in point of Entertainment, be not, in some measure, on a par with those in *London*, the Spectators who have often occasion to visit those, will not be satisfied, and will of course decry it. And yet, as the Receipts of the most indifferent Season of the *London* Theatres, are generally one half more than of the best Seasons here, it will be found very hard for any Manager to attempt to vie with them in Expence. Mr. *Sheridan* tried to do it, but hitherto with Loss to himself. The Undertakers of the Theatre, during his Absence, were considerable Losers by the two Seasons, tho' they procured the best Performers

Performers from *London* ; but it was at so dear a Rate as to swallow up all the Profit. That the Public may judge how much the Price of Performers has of late been enhanced ; twelve Years ago, Mr. *Garrick*, in his height of Reputation, asked but four hundred Pounds of Mr. *Sheridan* for a Season's Playing ; and Mrs. *Cibber* had but three hundred from the Proprietors of *Aungier-street*. Mr. *Barry* has since declined an Offer of a thousand Pounds Salary, and Mrs. *Woffington* received the Sum of eight hundred and forty Pounds for her last Year's Performance in this Kingdom. Others have risen in the same Proportion, and the Sallaries of the lowest are now double to what they were at that Time. ' *But tho' Dublin can not well support one, it may two, from a Spirit of Emulation.*' Is this warranted by Experience either here, or in any other Country ? Did the State of the Stage become better or worse, when the Experiment was tried here before ? Was it not often tried in *London*, and always with the same bad Success. Shall it be pretended, that *Dublin* is able to do what *Paris* does not attempt, what *London* attempts and can not succeed in ? *Paris*, the great Rival of *London*, the Rendezvous of all the Youth of *Europe*, has but one *French* Comedy. *London*, which in point of Number is better able to support seven, in point of Wealth twenty Play-houses, than *Dublin* can one, has never yet been able to keep up two in credit. As one rises the other always declines. And what is the Consequence of the Contest ? * Hear it from the old Oracle of the Stage. ' I know it is the common Opinion, ' that the more Play-houses the more Emulation ; I ' grant it ; but what has this Emulation ended in ? ' why a daily Contention which shall soonest surfeit ' you with the best Plays ; so that, when what ought ' to please, can no longer please, your Appetite is a-

gain to be raised by such monstrous Presentations
as dishonour the Taste of a civilized People.

Is not this, at present, the Case in *London*? Can they now support either Theatre by the Force of dramattick Entertainments alone? Has not one subsisted entirely upon the Strength of Pantomime, that living Puppet-shew, brought in Aid of a declining Stage? Is it not well known, that Mr. *Garrick*, with all his Merit, all his Popularity, all his Skill as a Manager (and never Man shewed more) notwithstanding he takes care always to secure the best Actors, and to exhibit the greatest Variety of Plays, and the best adapted to the Taste of the Times, yet, without the Assistance of those same living Puppet shews, would not long be able to keep open his Doors with any Profit to himself.

But so it is, that the Experience of past Times, and other Countries, nay, the Examples before our Eyes have but little weight with us. Whilst there is no care taken to breed up the Youth of these Realms to a just Taste of the liberal Arts, Novelty and Variety will ever have the Ascendant over Propriety and Beauty. And whilst wild and giddy Fancy presides at the Shew, such Scenes must be exhibited as will make Judgement blush, and hide itself. It is amazing to think, that as far as the History of the Stage can be traced in *England*, the same absurd Demands were constantly made by each rising Generation, and that none of them received any Benefit from the Experience of the preceding one. When there was but one Theatre, they were always calling out for two, in order, by *Emulation*, to have their Entertainments improved; and, when, by Experience, they found themselves mistaken, they then called out for but one

one Stage, and an Union of the Companies. When this succeeded to their Wish, and a good Theatre has flourished for more than 20 Years, they again *took a Jewish Surfeit of the Sweets*, and once more demanded two Houses. By which, at length, they have irretrievably put an End to all true Taste for the Drama in that Country. We have exactly followed their Example. Numbers must remember what a Clamour was raised in the Town about fourteen Years ago, to unite the Houses, without which, they said, they could never hope for good Entertainment. They were wise in this, the Event has justified them. The Union, with great Difficulty, and at a large Expence, was accomplished. Scarce have they had Time to enjoy the Advantages attending it, with those very Advantages full in their Sight, than they now call out again for two Houses. Is this a Conduct becoming rational Beings? No, surely. Let them take care, that whilst they grasp at the Shadow, like the Dog in the Fable, they do not lose the Substance. Or, that they do not share the same Fate with the old Woman, who having a good Hen that regularly laid her one Egg a Day, thought that, if she gave her twice that Quantity of Food, she would lay two; but the Consequence was, that she left off laying entirely.

The next Inducement offered to the Town was, the peculiar Advantages which the new Theatre should have over the former. These appeared in a pompous Paragraph, setting forth the large Dimensions of the new one, and some new Pieces of Mechanism in moving the Scenes. As to the former of these, can any one acquainted with Theatrical Affairs imagine, that the Largeness of a Play-house is an Advantage to it? On the Contrary, does not every one know that this

was one great Errour in the Structure of *Covent-Garden*, and has been the chief Cause of the preference at all Times given to *Drury-lane*? For this plain Reason, that Fashion is the main Ingredient towards filling a Play-house; and as a constant appearance of full Houses, is the sure way to establish Fashion, the smaller House with only the same Number of People shall appear full, when the greater, on account of the Spaces unoccupied, shall be said to be empty. Would it not be reasonable to conclude from this boasted size of the new Theatre, capable of containing almost double the Number of People that the present can, that when Mr. *Barry* was last here, there were Numbers turned away from the Doors for want of room? Whereas it appears by the Accounts, that after the first Month of his performance, to the commencements of Benefits, there were but two Nights on which there were full Houses, and that upon an average, the Receipts did not amount upon the whole Number of Nights, to much more than half of what the House can easily contain.

In answer to this it may be said, that acting is not the Point now to be depended upon; that the Stage is purposely calculated for the grand living Puppet-show. And that Plays will be considered at *Crow-street*, in the same Light as they are at *Covent-Garden*, only as a Sort of necessary Prologues to the Puppet-show, in order to keep up the State of the Theatre. Let the Undertaker of such a Scheme in *Dublin* tremble; he knows not how few Audiences there are here to see the same Show. *London* has afforded in one Season ten thousand pounds to a Pantomime, which cost three thousand. *Dublin* to the same Pantomime would not have given one thousand.

We are to suppose that this is the use chiefly intended by the Account given, in the same Advertisement, of a new constructed Machine, which is to pre-

sent to view eight different Sets of Scenes in the Space of one Minute. Now, irregular as our Drama is, as we know of no Play in our Language that requires such very quick shifting of the Scenes, the Use of this Machine can only be shewn in Pantomime; to be sure under the direction of some potent Magician. But however surprising this Operation may be, yet that very quick firing of Scenes upon an Audience (borrowed no doubt from the late Improvements in the Prussian Artillery) may not perhaps be quite so pleasing, unless the Scenes are so bad as not to stand an Examination.

But what gross Insults are these on their Mother Country? Have her own Sons by their long residence in another Kingdom, forgot her so far, as really to believe her the Boeotia, which they hear her called, and to think she is to be taken in by such palpable Baits? Or do they consider her as savage and ignorant as the wild Indians, to barter her Treasures for Bits of Tinsel and Glass. Woe be those who think thus of *Ireland*! She is indeed liable to Impostition, from an openness of Nature; but she wants not quickness to discover her Errour, nor Spirit to resent it on those, who should attempt the Impostition. There was a saying of a very sensible Lord Lieutenant, that *Ireland* had the best knack of discovering a Fool of any Country he had ever known. And indeed in that great Forest of Men, *London*, Fools and Knaves may easily pass undistinguished amongst the Crowd; but there is not sufficient cover for them here, nor can they long escape detection, amongst a People of great natural Sagacity, and quickness of Parts, who have always, upon proper Culture and fair Opportunity, appeared amongst the most distinguished Names of Europe.

Another Inducement to gain Encouragers, and new Subscribers, is, that all the great Actors and Actresses of *London*, are engaged to the new Theatre.

Who says so? Why, every body. Do the Undertakers say so? No, but their Friends do it for them, and the Undertakers are at liberty to let the Reports pass current, whilst they serve their Turn, and afterwards to deny them, as shall suit their Convenience. Thus all manner of Rumours may be propagated, without a possibility of tracing them to their fountain head, or of coming to any kind of Certainty. But the Degree of Credit, which is to be given this Report, may be settled from this Consideration, that most of the Performers, of any Eminence, make as much or more, by their Benefits, than they do by their Salaries; and this arises from a Custom, little practised on those Occasions here, that of giving what are commonly called gold Tickets; which Gentlemen and Ladies in *London* usually do to the favourite Performers, from one, to forty Guineas. And this has been so far taken into Consideration, that upon the engaging any Performer from *London*, Mr. *Sheridan* was always obliged to make up in Salary, what was likely to be deficient in Point of Benefit. Now it is said, that Mr. *Shuter* is to be one of the Party. Mr. *Shuter* is a good Comedian, tho' in a very confined Way, and a great Favourite of the Town. His Salary may amount to about 300 *l.* but he makes at least five hundred by his Benefit. Mr. *Shuter* must want common Sense to quit so good a Settlement in *London*, to come over on a precarious Undertaking, unless he were promised a thousand pounds at least. Whether *Dublin* can afford such a Sum to a low Comedian, may be left to the Judgement of all who know any Thing of theatrical Affairs. The Demands of others may be judged of by this Standard, and then let it be considered, whether an Undertaker could be more effectually ruined, than by bringing over a Number of favourite Performers from *London*? But is it to be wondered at, that such confident Assertions should be made, with respect to

those on the other Side of the Water, which can not easily be disproved, when the same Thing is averred with respect to several Performers, now belonging to the Theatre-Royal in *Dublin*, and that not privately but their Names openly mentioned in print; when they themselves proclaim to the World the falsity of the Charge. One Thing indeed is certain, that *Mr. Masklin* and *Mrs. Masklin* are engaged with *Mr. Barry*; and it is also rumoured, that *Mr. Sowdon* is engaged, and that *Mr. Theophilus Cibber* intends to join them. But when the Names of eminent Performers, now established in the Theatres of *London*, many of them Articles for some Years to come, are mentioned, can not be with any Truth, except with regard to Summer Expeditions; in that Case indeed the House can not be too large, for the sake of the Health of his Majesty's liege Subjects, that they may have breathing-room, and sit cool.

The warm espousers of the other Theatre, did not however rest much of their Cause upon the proposed Advantages, that would accrue from erecting it. They knew well, that a sensible and clear sighted People, who had for some Years enjoyed their Diversion, confessedly in a much higher Degree than formerly, would be very unwilling to try Experiments or run any risque of throwing it back to its former State, upon any plausible Pretext, offered by interested men. It would be accounted madness in those who are well, instead of endeavouring to keep themselves so, to apply to Medicines of violent Operation, in order to be *better than well*. When they had such a recent Instance of the many Evils which flowed from two Theatres, besides the lack of Entertainment; and the many Advantages which resulted from their Union, besides the flourishing State of the Stage, it would be a proof of the blindest Ignorance and highest Stupidity, to wish for another Theatre on any other Condition than one; which is, that the

present Stage should be allowed to be at so low an
 level in point of Conduct, Decency, and Regularity,
 and that the Entertainments, exhibited there, should
 be so very wretched, and in so slovenly a Way, that
 no change whatsoever could possibly make Things
 worse. For desperate Remedies are only to be ap-
 plied in desperate Cases. This they well knew, and
 therefore had the effronterie to rest the Merits of
 their Cause chiefly on that point. At noon-day they
 asserted it was night; many who had Eyes, pretended
 to believe them, and the blind, gave implicit Faith
 to their Testimony. Perhaps there never was a
 more audacious Attempt to impose upon Credulity.
 They asserted, that Mr. *Sheridan* was Jealous of all
 great Actors, and never chose to have any of Repu-
 tation, appear on the Irish Stage but himself. That
 as he had the sole property of the Stage, he cared
 not to how little Expence he put himself, and there-
 fore furnished no Entertainment to the Town this
 Winter, that was worth seeing.

If this Account were transmitted to distant Coun-
 tries, the Writer might expect to gain Credit to it.
 But here, in *Dublin*, in opposition to the most noto-
 rious Facts, the most glaring Proofs, to make such
 Assertions in the Face of the World, is a sad Symp-
 tom of the State of the Times! 'Tis an Omen of
 fatal presage to a State, when Falshood can stalk o-
 penly thro' the Streets, and expect to gain more nu-
 merous Followers, by shewing her naked Face, than
 she could by wearing the Mask of Truth.

Mr. *Sheridan*, jealous of eminent Actors! He, who
 upon his first Undertaking invited Mr. *Garrick* to join
 him; and had Mr. *Barry* with him at the same
 Time; he who, more than once, earnestly, tho' in
 vain, solicited Mr. *Barry's* return to his native Coun-
 try: He, who in their several Turns has had every
 living Performer of Eminence in his Company at
 exorbitant Rates: He, who has assisted to raise a
 greater number of Performers of Merit than all the

Ma-

Managers of the *British Theatres* have done these forty Years : He, who, against his own Interest, obliged Mr. *Barry* reluctantly to come over to support the Stage during his Absence : If all these well known Facts will not secure him against such an Imputation, what Character can be safe ?

Nor is the second Charge less extraordinary.

Mr. *Sheridan* frugal of Expence with regard to Publick Entertainment ! He, who has no other Crime whereof to accuse himself, but his Profuseness in that respect, to the unjustifiable Neglect of his own Interests and those of his Family. Had he served himself with half the Zeal he served the *Publick*, his Enemies would not now have an Opportunity of reproaching him so unjustly, for he might long ere this have been in a Sphere out of their reach. But they, who could so falsely lay Profuseness in private living to his Charge, would not stick of accusing him of Parsimony towards the Publick. Yet as Malice ever overshoots itself, surely they were not Wise in making this latter Charge ; because, with respect to the former, they could have been disproved but by few ; but with respect to the latter the whole Town are Witnesses against them. If all the former Sums he laid out had been forgotten ; if by his raising the Expences of a Season from twelve or fifteen hundred Pounds at the utmost, to six seven and eight thousand Pounds and that too in the Space of a very few Years, should not be remembered ; yet the recent Instance he has given of laying out more than a thousand Pounds to supply the Place of the destroyed Scenery, to ornament the House, and improve the Wardrobe, (Points which make but small returns with regard to Profit, as few People are drawn by them to the *Theatre*) shews at least no Mark of Frugality with respect to the Public, when under such circumstances he could venture to expend so large a Sum chiefly for the Credit of the Stage

and that the *Dublin Theatre* might not appear unworthy of the City. And with regard to Performers, let the following account prove how *frugal* he was in his offers to them, and how *unwilling* to engage any of Merit. When Mr. *Victor* went to *London*, merely upon that Business, he had a general unlimited Power to engage whomsoever he thought proper. He had also some particular Points in commission, in consequence whereof, he would have agreed with Mr. *Barry* on any terms. He offered Mrs. *Cibber* one hundred Pounds more than she ever made in any one Season in *London*, Benefit and Sallary both included. He offered Miss *Pritchard* three hundred Pounds tho' she was but newly come upon the Stage, had played but a few Characters, and but a doubtful Opinion could be formed from those of her future Success.

Nor was there a single Person of the least degree of Merit, who was free from Articles, and at Liberty to engage, left unsolicited. But it is not so easy to allure Persons from *London*, who are well settled there, as is fondly imagined. It is with the utmost reluctance that any of them ever came to pass a Winter in *Dublin*; and were the History of the several Engagements made with Mr. *Sheridan* known, it would be found that not one was ever induced to come over even at the most exorbitant Prices, 'till their Situation in *London* from some Circumstance or other was rendered uneasy to them. Amongst the number that Mr. *Victor* applied to he could conclude an Agreement with only two; Mrs. *Fitz-Henry* (a valuable Acquisition indeed,) and Mrs. *Hamilton* (formerly Mrs. *Bland*) who alone was thought capable of supplying Mrs. *Woffington's* Room in Comedy, since her quitting the Stage, and therefore was detained in *London* at a monstrous Expence, in open breach of Articles, for the Penalty of which Mr. *Sheridan* is now suing her Husband, and has already cast him in one of the Courts. Finding that he could

could get no other Dramatick Performers of the least note, Mr. *Viſtor* then engaged the first Dancer of the Opera Signor *Tioli*; whose Skill as a Master, and Abilities as a comick Dancer, have with all the Judges in the several Countries of *Europe* placed him in the first Class. From this Account it is apparent that Mr. *Sheridan* used his utmost Endeavours to procure better Entertainment for the Town this Winter then they ever had before, and that he was far from grudging any Expence for that purpose. If there be a Failure in that respect therefore, no Blame can justly be laid at his Door. But it is well worth while to examine a little into that Point. It is well known to every one with what Industry a Cry has been raised that there is no Entertainment at the *Theatre* this Winter. If that were true, the Manager has met with the most extraordinary piece of good Fortune that ever happened to any one so circumstanced, for the Play House was hardly ever more frequented. And yet there was not a single Instance of any particular Interest made for any one Night, nor any play bespoke during the Season, whilst the World knows that much Interest was used, and no Endeavours spared by Multitudes to prevent Success. To what then could the Success be owing? Did the People come to see whether it was true that there was no Entertainment there? That would have been a most unusual Motive, and such a one as in no *Theatre* in the World ever occasioned full Houses before. It would but ill become him to rate either his own Merit, or that of the performers employed by him, but he begs Leave to state a Fact, which will shew in what Estimation they have been held by the publick. Many have declared that they have no pleasure in the Performance of this Winter; and no doubt all think so, who say, they were better Entertained during Mr. *Sheridan's* Absence. Let them enjoy their Opinion.

Qui Bavium non odit amet tua carmina Mævi.

But will they not allow others to differ from them in point of Judgment, and say they are better pleased with the present Entertainment? It is clear from the Receipts, that the Majority are against them; for on the present View of the Theatrical Books, the Receipt of this Season is likely to exceed that of Mr. Barry's by near two thousand Pounds. The Sums of Money taken for their Support ever have been, and ever will be, the most infallible Proof of the Degrees of Delight the People have in publick Entertainments.

As the Date of Mr. Sheridan's Theatrical Life, in his Capacity of an Actor, is drawing towards a Period, before he makes his final Exit, lest he should not have a future Opportunity, he humbly begs leave to return the Public his sincere Thanks for their constant kind Acceptance of his poor Endeavours to please, but more particularly for their uncommon Humanity shewn to him this Winter. They saw him overloaded with Business, surrounded with Difficulties, persecuted by the most unrelenting Malice, and struggling with a most dispiriting Disorder. Under these weighty Pressures was he often obliged to appear before them in Characters that required a vacant and unruffled Mind, a perfect State of Health, and an even flow of Spirits. They saw him exerting himself as much as it was possible for a Man so circumstanced to do; they kindly accepted of his Endeavours, tho' far short of his Wishes, to please; and cheered his drooping Heart with the strong Cordial of the highest Marks of Approbation. Every Night's Appearance was a Confutation of the false Reports of his Enemies, and the Audiences humanely took this Method of standing between him and Malice. His forty times repeated Characters drew as full Houses as ever; but he must impute much of the

Applause given on those Occasions to the Benevolence and Generosity of his Auditors.

If the Advocates for Mr. *Barry's* Undertaking had contented themselves with supporting their own Side of the Question by specious Arguments, and delusive Promises; or run down the other by Scurrility and Falshood, with regard to the Theatrical Controversy only, they might be justified by some, as acting only upon interested Principles. But what Term can be found to express the Degree of Wickedness and Malignity shewn by the Mouth-piece of the Party, who takes upon him to speak the Sentiments of all Mr. *Barry's* Friends, in one of the most false and infamous Libels that ever was published? Not contented in the first Part of the Work with endeavouring to deprive Mr. *Sheridan* of all Subsistence from the Theatre, the inhuman Author of that Piece, ran straight to the Asylum which he was preparing for himself, in order to have the Door shut against him, that he might be left a Wanderer on the Face of the Earth, and have no Roof to shelter him. Did any of Mr. *Barry's* Friends avow the Sentiments of this Writer, by applauding and dispersing the Libel, and do they call themselves Christians? Do they call themselves Men? Nay, do they call themselves Mr. *Barry's* Friends? Was Mr. *Barry* about to set up an Academy? If not, with what Colour of Pretence could his Friends interfere in that Point? Do they consider what Discredit they reflect on Mr. *Barry* and his Cause? Could they not serve him without ruining Mr. *Sheridan*? Was his Merit to be enhanced by the Demerit of his Antagonist only? Were they blind, were they infatuated, not to see that such apparent Malice, such wicked Measures must hurt the Cause they espoused? But why are such Questions asked? Blind and infatuated they must have been, or they never would have dared to enclose those Pamphlets, and have them delivered to each Member of the

grand

grand National Council. What an Insult to the whole Body, what an Affront to each Individual of that august Assembly was it, in so open a Manner to attempt to bias their Judgments? By what? by Reason and Argument, and a Case fairly stated? No, but by thrusting into the Hands of Legislators a Libel apparently stuffed with Malice and Falshood, whose Author, were he prosecuted to Conviction, must by the Laws suffer an ignominious Punishment. Blind and infatuated they must have been, when they did not see that their whole Method of Proceeding clearly shewed, that they thought Mr. *Barry* could never be settled firmly in the Dominion he aspires to, in the very Monopoly which they pretend now to clamour against (but without which they well know he will have but a fruitless Crown on his Head and a barren Scepter in his Hand) unless Mr. *Sheridan* should not only be banished from the Stage, but from the Kingdom also.

Mr. *Sheridan* is heartily sorry for Mr. *Barry*; is heartily sorry that he has such Friends, whose furious Zeal has brought into Action a deep-laid Scheme of wicked, cunning Men, calculated for their own private Advantage merely, which must infallibly end in his Ruin. Had they been really his Friends, they would much rather have used their utmost Endeavours to persuade him into the very eligible Terms proposed to him by his only true Friend, Mr. *Sheridan*. Perhaps they may start at this Title, but it is one which Mr. *Sheridan* can shew them under Mr. *Barry*'s own Hand. There was a Time of Adversity when the whole World deserted him, and Mr. *Sheridan* alone stuck by him. At that Time, in that Winter of his Fortune, many of the Swallows that have since wantoned in his Sunshine Days, hid themselves in Holes and were dead to him. His Obligations to *his only Friend* at that Juncture he has largely expressed in his Letters, now in Mr. *Sheridan*'s Possession, and no doubt would be glad of an Opportunity

nity to repay them. And can his interested and pretended Friends, can some of those who have crept out of their Holes to bask in his Summer Days, suppose that he can think the better of them for their cruel Treatment of a Man, *once his only Friend*? Mr. *Sheridan* indeed could have wished that Mr. *Barry*, for his own Sake, had long since put a Stop to their Proceedings, by shewing his Disapprobation of them, and disavowing all Knowledge of the first Pamphlet; but that Omission, it is likely, has been owing to a Negligence of Temper. A Friend of his indeed, has within these few Days disavowed, in Mr. *Barry's* Name, *the many Pamphlets that are daily published against Mr. Sheridan and his Plan for an Academy*. But it is a Pity that he did not think proper himself publickly to disclaim all Knowledge, all Approbation of the first infamous one printed three Months since, and with amazing Expedition reprinted in *London*.

Some Pleas, upon which the Advocates for the other House seem chiefly to build, shall be stated and answered in the most candid Manner.

P L E A i f t.

That it would be extremely hard the Subscribers to the new Theatre should lose their Money, and not have their Covenants fulfilled.

A N S W E R.

This is a Point in which the Public is no way concerned. If the Subscribers (as was once done in *London*) had generously laid down a Sum of Money for the Improvement of the publick Entertainment, from which they were afterwards to expect no Benefit, nor to leave any Load on the Theatre, the Plea might be of some weight. But when, without any Authority to support them, they went with their Eyes open
upon

upon an adventurous Scheme, which if it succeeds must turn out greatly to their Profit; when the very Nature of the Design carries in it a moral Certainty rather of destroying than improving the Entertainment, how can they expect that the Public should be of their Side, or interere at all with respect to their private Property? On the other Hand, let the Plea offered by the Proprietors of the united Theatres be considered, and it will soon appear on whose Side the greater Hardship would lie. One Body of Subscribers, consisting of several Noblemen and Gentlemen of the first Distinction, had built an elegant Theatre in *Aungier-street*, and for a long time endeavoured to support it, chiefly by considerable Sums disbursed out of their own Pockets. Another Set of Subscribers, upon the old mistaken Notion that two Theatres would be the Means of improving the Diversion, built another in *Smock-alley*. For many Years an Opposition was carried on, till both were reduced to the lowest ebb. The Voice of the Town called aloud for an Union, as the only Means of making the Stage flourish. The Proprietors, after an expensive Law-suit, with great Trouble and Difficulty at last accomplished the Point. How far the Intention was answered, of improving the Diversion by it, the World may judge. But before the Point was brought to bear, the Proprietors of the two Theatres had from first to last expended more than twelve thousand Pounds, for which they at present receive only two hundred Pounds a Year, besides the Use of their free Tickets. Have the Subscribers to *Crow-street* an equal Degree of Merit to plead with respect to the Public? Can they hope that their fifteen hundred Pounds in one Scale shall weigh down the twelve thousand in the other? And would not the Proprietors of the united Theatres have a just Right to complain of the Fickleness and Ingratitude of the Town, after having at their unanimous De-

fire

fire put themselves to such Expence and Trouble in order to establish but one Stage; after having succeeded beyond Expectation, beyond Hope, in the proposed good Consequences to the Public; if that very Public should in any Shape be aiding or abetting to the raising another Theatre, to the undoing of all that they had done, and relapsing into the old State, whereof only a few Years since they so heavily complained? Surely, on the other Hand, those Proprietors have a just Call, a just Demand on the Public, to give their utmost Assistance towards suppressing the unjust and dangerous Attempt.

P L E A 2d.

That it would be extremely hard if Mr. *Barry*, after having expended *his whole Fortune* in the Undertaking, should not be allowed to reap the Benefit of it, but on the contrary lose the whole, to the Ruin of his Wife and Children.

A N S W E R.

It does not appear that Mr. *Barry* has expended one Shilling of his Fortune. It is pretty plain from his own Confession that he never intended it. When he refused the Offer of Mr. *Sowdon's* Money, what was his Reason? Not that he did not want it, as having enough of his own, but *that his Friends in Dublin would raise it for him by Subscription*. And have not two or three different Subscriptions been raised? Has any Money hitherto been expended but from that Fund? Is there not another Subscription now soliciting with the utmost Assiduity? And is it not likely that there will be another, and another after that, if Men are to be drawn in by Credulity and a Desire of Gain, to this *South-Sea* Project? But let it be taken for granted that he has embarked a
large

large Sum in it, yet what has the Public to do with it? Was it for their Sakes or his own that he did so? He has answered that Question himself, by fairly declaring his Motive. Did the Public invite him to it? Did they give him any Encouragement? No, there has not been a single Instance of the Kind. From the very Nature of the Subscription, from the Difficulty with which it was raised upon such large Premiums, the contrary is clear. It is clear that it is a Thing pushed against the Sense of the Town, against the Judgment of Mankind. For as there is no one of common Sense who does not acknowledge that *Dublin* cannot support two Theatres, who would wish to see one, already established upon a better footing than any in these Dominions, after many Struggles, vast Expence, and the hard Labour of Years; who indeed in their Senses would wish to see such a Theatre overturned; or depressed, with not the least Degree of Probability of having one upon a better footing, and with almost a Certainty, in a short space of Time, of reducing the Stage to it's former wretched Condition? Are the Public therefore called upon to support a Scheme so directly opposite to their Interests? What colourable Pretext can the Friends of Mr. *Barry* offer for such an Application? Did he not enter a Volunteer into this rash Undertaking, with his Eyes open, with all due Information given to him, all the Consequences to be apprehended fairly laid before him; against the Opinion, against the Advice of *some of his best Friends*, as can be amply proved, however they may now endeavour to support him? Did he not rush into this hazardous Enterprize, notwithstanding the most pressing Offers to enter into a secure, an eligible, a profitable Scheme? Did he not reject Terms which he himself acknowledged were equal to his utmost Expectations? And is such a Man to be pitied if he fails of Success? Should it be considered

as

as a Wrong done to him, to prevent his proceeding in a Design which will probably end in his Ruin, or in the Ruin of the Stage, or in both? For the wisest of his Friends are clearly of Opinion, that unless by a vigorous Effort at setting out, he should be able to shut up the Theatre in *Smock-alley*, it must end in his Ruin. And would not this bear somewhat hard on Mr. *Sheridan*? Might not he in that Case with more Reason complain of Injustice? Might not he with somewhat a better Pretence apply to the Public for Assistance? Let the Merits of the Cause fairly be heard.

Mr. *Barry* and Mr. *Sheridan* stand Candidates for the sole Property of the *Irish* Stage. Mr. *Barry's* Pretensions are, that as soon as he had made any tolerable Progress in his Profession he set out for *London*, entered into foreign Service, there has remained for ten Years, during which Time he never revisited his native Country, but one Season that he was compelled to it; and by his own Acknowledgment he does not now mean to fix here, but now and then, either in Summer or Winter, to pay *Dublin* a Visit, according as his Affairs are circumstanced, and bring others with him, in order to fill their Purses, carry as much Money away with them as they can, and add one more to the many Drains which keep this poor Country so low. Whilst Mr. *Sheridan* remained at home, and with infinite Pains and Cost was the first who established a Theatre in this Kingdom, worthy of the Name. He did it at the frequent Hazards of his Life, to the Ruin of his Constitution, and hitherto with considerable Loss. Just as Mr. *Sheridan* had a Prospect of being reimbursed his Damages, and securing a moderate Income (no way adequate to his Risques and Labours) Mr. *Barry* suddenly steps in at Harvest-time, to reap the Corn which he had sown. Mr. *Sheridan* worn out with Labour, unable any longer to till the Ground

Ground himself, reduced in his Circumstances by Fire, Inundations, inclement Skies, and bad Neighbourhood, unable to stand the Expences of a Suit, and intending to remove to a neighbouring Plain, and pass the residue of his Days in the less laborious Employment of tending Flocks, offered Mr. Barry a Moiety of the Farm at the same Rent, without any Consideration for the many Improvements made on it. But that would not content him, he would have all or none. And indeed unless the Grand Jury of the County, who know Mr. Sheridan to have been a Pains-taking Man, and have been Witnesses to the visibly expensive Improvements made by him (which have kept him poor) take Compassion on him, and stand his Friend, he fears he shall be forced out of his Farm, for they alledge that it was a Common; whereas all the Neighbours know that it was a waste, barren Piece of Ground, full of Quagmires and Pits, into which their young Cattle that strayed thither used often to fall and were lost; it was considered as a Nuisance by the whole Parish, and it was by their Desire he enclosed it, and at great Expence and Labour made it profitable Ground. Whose Case is hardest, that of the Plaintiff or of the Defendant? Of the Invader or the Possessor of the Farm? And are Mr. Barry's Wife and Children brought in to move Compassion on this Occasion? Mr. Barry has but two Children, one of them provided for; Mr. Sheridan has double that Number, all in the State of Childhood. Nor will he yield to Mr. Barry in parental Tenderness. He cannot help thinking, that it is much harder upon them to have that Property rendered precarious, which was the chief Provision made for them by the hard Labour of his Life. When his Plea comes therefore to be placed in Opposition to Mr. Barry's, he believes that it will be considered by the generality of the World as rather the more forcible one of the two.

P L E A 3d.

That the establishing this new Theatre will contribute much to the Improvement of Theatrical Entertainments in this City.

A N S W E R.

Let that be proved and Mr. *Sheridan* will at once give up all Regard to his private Interest. Nay, let there be one Argument urged in support of it that will stand the Test of Reason, and he will give up the whole Point. On the contrary, if what he has already set forth on the Subject of two Theatres does not carry Conviction to every Mind, he will undertake to prove, that if the two Theatres should open in Opposition to each other, the Stage will not only be speedily reduced to Poverty and Distress, but, in all human Probability, will never be able to raise its Head again in this Kingdom.

It will be granted that the two Theatres must go on either with equal, or with different Success. If with equal Success, it is impossible that either of them should afford to be at as great an Expence as a single Theatre could. For let it be supposed, at a Medium that eight thousand Pounds is the utmost Sum that *Dublin* can afford to the Support of that Diversion; if each House takes but four thousand, neither can afford to lay out so much as if there had been but one Play-house which took eight thousand. Supposing the Division unequal, and that one were to take five thousand, and the other only three (which would be monstrous Disproportion) still the Case, even to the best House, would be the same; and though for one Season one Theatre might have the Advantage, yet the other would probably make up the Difference in the next, so as in general to preserve an Equilibre

In that Case, to give the Town such Entertainment as they have been accustomed to, both Undertakers must run out considerably. Or if they lessen the Entertainment, the Audiences will dwindle away of course, the Diversion will grow out of fashion, and both Houses sink into their former wretched State. It may be said indeed, that one Theatre may so far outshine the other as to carry the whole vogue, to shut up and entirely destroy it's Rival. And pray would not that be leaving the Town in it's present Situation at best? Does not this Argument at once put an End to all the boasted Advantages which would arise from two? And is it certain that after such a Struggle the victorious House would fall into the Hands of a Person who would at the same Risque, Expence, and Toil restore the Theatre to, and preserve it in the same Degree of Regularity wherein it now stands? Shall this be acknowledged by those who call themselves Mr. Barry's Friends, to be a necessary Point to ensure Success to his Designs, and will they not assign some Reason why he did not chuse to take upon him the Conduct of the sole Theatre, already established to his Hands, and in a flourishing Condition? And can it be reconciled to Prudence, to common Sense, that he should rather prefer so hazardous a Scheme as the setting up a new House, which from the very Nature of the Subscription by which it is built, will have an heavier Load and greater Incumbrances on it than the former? Indeed this whole strange Phænomenon can be rationally accounted for but upon one Principle, which is, that Mr. Barry has been urged to the Undertaking by Persons who had more Ill-will to Mr. Sheridan than Friendship to Mr. Barry; and deluded also by the specious Arguments of artful Men, who being shut out of all Theatres, and consequently desperate, care not what dangerous Enterprize they involve him in, as they are sure their Condition cannot be worse, and out of

such a Contest they may find an Establishment for themselves, upon the Ruin both of Mr. *Barry* and Mr. *Sheridan*. Of this Point Mr. *Barry* had early Notice. * And he had good Reason not to slight the Warning, as he well knows that the very Man whose Counsels have chiefly sway'd him in this Affair, whom he has taken by the Hand and brought over to this Kingdom as his *Mentor*, once laid a Plot to undermine his Master, and to get the Theatre out of his Hands, though he was under the highest Obligations to him, it is said, even for the Preservation of his Life. It may be wondered at, that all Mr. *Barry*'s Friends did not unite to dissuade him from so dangerous a Step; but many of them, who were not Judges of the Matter, were imposed upon by the same specious Arguments which had deluded him. The more clear-sighted amongst them foresaw the Consequences, and did their utmost to prevent him from this Attempt. But after he had embarked, from a Zeal and Constancy which would be laudable, if they carried the Point no farther, they resolved to stand by him at all Events, and give him every Assistance in their Power. But surely if any of them should take unjustifiable Methods to ruin the Character and Fortune of another Man, in order to make room for his Success, such a Conduct is not reconcilable to any Principles of Honour or Humanity; nor can be palliated by any Warmth of Friendship.

Mistaken Men! if ever they think to carry their Point, in that way. There are many secure ways of keeping up an Opposition in the inferior Theatre, (supposing that of *Smock-alley* should prove so, a Point that will not easily be given up) without risque of Loss, which would infallibly prevent the other from making any Profit. An Opposition will ever be upheld, whilst the Passion for the Stage furnishes such a Number of Candidates as cannot find room in the only two established Theatres

* Vid. Append. p. 42.

of *London*; and whilst there are such various Entertainments to be procured. It has been proved that an Opposition must end in the Ruin of both. This must produce an Union; and if an Union with a third Theatre should be found necessary, and bring with it another heavy Rent, another more numerous Body of Subscribers, and another Set of Pensioners, and worthless or dangerous Actors, who should wisely have secured themselves in Contracts for a Number of Years, or many of them (as before) for Life; is it not evident that the *Irish Stage*, already too much encumbered, must sink under the Weight of such an additional Load, without the least Hope of ever raising it's Head again in this Kingdom?

And now, YE CITIZENS OF DUBLIN, ye who wish that Peace and good Fellowship may long flourish amongst you, give a serious Heed to what follows. Is there any one who can look into Events that must not shudder to think of the dreadful Consequences which will naturally flow from such an Opposition? What Mischiefs has the Spirit of Party lately done to this unhappy Country! How has it changed the very Genius and Temper of the People, not long since remarkable for Humanity, Charity, Hospitality, and every social Virtue! How has the Fury-Discord raged through your Streets, and frightened fair Peace from your City, with Plenty, Justice, Truth, and Benevolence in her Train! How has she entered into private Houses, set Husband against Wife, Father against Son, and Brother against Brother!

O Patria! O Divum Domus!

Has not the *Island of Saints* been openly called an *Island of Sinners*? Has it not been told in *Gath*? Has it not been published in *Ascalon*? And can any
 Lover

Lover of *Ireland* wish to keep amongst us the Spirit which has caused all this? Are the recent Wounds so far healed, as not easily to break out again, and bleed afresh? Are the Embers so far extinguished, as that by the Application of the poorest Stubble they may not blaze forth again? If the Rage of Party rose to such an Height, as to force it's way into the only Place of publick Diversion (a Thing unprecedented in any civilized State) what is to be expected when there shall be two, one of which will certainly fly to her Standard, and list under her for Support. Or should there remain no Cause of Party on National Principles, will not two Theatres necessarily produce one? Party is a long-lived Monster, and is not easily destroyed. When the Carcase which fed it is consumed, it will prey upon Garbage. nay, it will support itself on Flies. A neighbouring Country has afforded us a recent Instance of this, in the Affair of *Elizabeth Canning* and the Gypsy which for more than a Year set the whole Nation together by the Ears. Partisans are like Dram-drinkers, who, when they cannot get Spirits of a fine Sort, will take up with Whiskey. The Advocate for each Theatre might light up as great a Discord and do as much Mischief in this City as were to sensibly felt not long since on another Account. Nothing is more likely to make Party universal in Town than Theatrical Contests; for all who frequent the Play-house, from the Boxes to the Twelve-penny Gallery, consider themselves as Parties concerned and there are but few in the Community who do not think that they are somewhat interested in the State of that Diversion, which is the only one that all Ranks and Orders of People can partake of at the same Time. In fact, upon all Occasions of that Sort, has ever proved so in these Kingdoms, even to descend so low as to enter into private Disputes between Strolling Actors, in Country Towns, who

Cases have been published upon being refused certain Parts, Cloaths, or some other trifling Circumstance, and raised such Contests (*risum teneatis*!) amongst the Inhabitants, as have ended in irreconcilable Enmities. And it is well known, that one of the greatest Factions, and of the longest Duration, which *Italy* ever saw, took it's Rise from a Theatrical Contest. It is easy to foresee, that the Ladies will not be neutral on this Occasion, and that the Gentlemen will be obliged to declare themselves. The ingenuous Warmth of Youth will readily hurry them from their Studies, to take Part in that Cause which they shall think the justest. Shopkeepers, Journeymen, and Apprentices will be more attentive to Theatrical Affairs than to their Business; and, in order to secure the Appearance of good Houses, and great Applause, such as cannot afford to pay will be admitted upon Passes, and contract such an Habit of idling as may never after be worn off. Nor are these the worst Consequences to be apprehended. All who know with what Zeal, with what Passion many are apt to enter into Party in this Kingdom; all who observe the very first Steps taken by the Advocates for the Undertakers of *Crow-street*, and the Virulence which they have already shewn, may easily foresee that they will not content themselves with being warm Friends to the Theatre which they espouse, but be also active Enemies against the other; they may go to disturb the Entertainments there, perhaps proceed to Outrages; this no doubt will be retaliated, and who can tell what dreadful Scenes may ensue? Certainly the Diversion will, at all Events, be destroyed; for the grave, the sober, and thinking Part of Mankind will never enter into such Bear-gardens. Add to all this, that it is not unlikely but that the most delining of the two Houses, as a temporary Expedient to procure Friends, will restore the Gentlemen to the Privilege of the Scenes, and perhaps the

the Footmen to their Gallery; and then *Dublin* will once more see itself in the valuable Possession of two such Theatres as *Aungier-street* and *Smock-alley* were thirteen Years ago.

No doubt many Gentlemen who have subscribed to *Grow-street*, or have been Advocates for the Undertaking, did not foresee the Consequences, or acted upon Misinformation. Now they have a fair and true State of the Case before them, it is hoped, upon a candid Examination, they will close with a Proposal made at the End of this Pamphlet, which is the only one that can prevent all the Mischiefs above-mentioned, can establish the Stage on a good Foundation, and at the same time secure themselves, and promote the true Interest of *Mr. Barry* much more than can ever be hoped for from pursuing their present Plan.

And now *Mr. Sheridan* has done with the Subject, he has no doubt but that the Candid and Humane have, as they went along, made all proper Allowances for the Haste in which his Appeal must have been drawn up, in the most disagreeable Circumstances; staggering under the Load of a Variety of Business; buffeted as he went along by implacable Enemies; surrounded on all Sides by Malice and Calumny, he had also to struggle with one of the most dispiriting Disorders, a Foe to Business, and a Destroyer of the Power of Attention. Part of it he was obliged to write by snatches, as he could catch now and then a lucid Interval. But far the greater Part was drawn up in a few Days, and in such Haste, that he was obliged to send the Sheets as he wrote them to the Press, without time to revise them. He knows his scribbling Enemies will rejoice to hear this, and greedily examine every Sentence, every Word, to find out something to cavil at. But they are to be informed, that now they can gratify nothing by it but their own Spleen. He is obliged to those Gentlemen for parting with
their

their Power of doing him any farther harm, by the apparent Malice and Falshood with which their Pieces are stuffed. The poorer Sort of them can no longer dine upon them; and as to those who are at the Expence of having them published and given gratis, he need not wish them more severely punished than they are by their own Act, that of paying large Sums out of their Pockets, to prove to the World that they have bad Heads and worse Hearts.

As this is the last Time Mr. *Sheridan* ever intends to trouble the World upon this Subject, he humbly begs Permission to enter personally and close his dramatic History with two Addressses; one to his Enemies, the other to the Public.

To my E N E M I E S.

Unappalled by Guilt, unconscious of ever having done a wilful Injury to any Person from the Hour of my Birth to this, dauntless and erect I appear before you, formidable as your Appearance is thro' Numbers, and dreadful thro' the various Passions in your Countenances, which darken and distort the *Human Fate Divine*. You may drown my Voice with your Clamour, but if you are Men, if you are *Christians* hear me. In this numerous Assembly, let any Man lay his Hand upon his Breast, and say whether I have ever given him just Cause to be my Enemy. What, all silent? Each looking at his Neighbour? are you struck with this Question? A good Omen! A Sign you are not abandoned of all Grace. Why are you then collectively my Enemies, when no Man singly has any Cause of Complaint? Alas, most of you know not. Many of you have been misled by deceitful and interested Men; many of you have only joined in the cry. There are some amongst you indeed, that have Reasons, but they are such as for

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their own sakes they will not dare to avow. I see amongst you many,

*Who neither knowing
My Faculties nor Person, yet will be
The Chronicles of my doing.*

I see amongst you Men, I blush to say it, who, by an Act of the most outrageous Violence, against all Laws divine and human, tore to pieces my Property, attempted to consume the Remainder by Fire, forcibly dispossessed me of my Freehold, and deprived me in one Night of the Fruit of ten Years incessant Toil. And do I see you now in this Assembly? What Crime had I committed against you? None. You acted upon Report; you were instigated by false Representations, and made the Tools of perfidious, of interested Men. But had my Crime been ever so great, were you not amply avenged? Will not the Ruin of my Fortune content you, will you persecute me to Death? Stay but a few Years, and you will be satisfied. *You have heaped a yore Age on me*—and cut short the Thread of my Destiny. You have ruined my Constitution as well as Fortune, and would long since have broke my Heart had it not been fortified by a good Conscience. But do you know what the Peace of a good Conscience is? Have you ever reflected, that, by that single Act you deprived my four helpless Children of a Property, which, otherwise, at this Day might have been worth ten thousand Pounds to them? And had I died soon after, how grievous must the Cries of the Widow and the Fatherless have been against you? And do you still aim at doing me and them more Mischiefs. Do you join in the Prayer to GOD to *forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that trespass against us?* And will not you forgive me the Trespases which you yourselves have committed against me? If you have Conscience, instead of farther Inquiries, you

will

will try to make me Reparation; if you have none, the Beasts that are void of Reason, are happier Beings than you, and their State more to be envied. May God forgive you, soften your Hearts, and enlighten your Understandings!

Behind I see a few who hang down their Heads, I know them well. Would I had always done so! They were once in my Confidence, I served them; I heaped Favours on them. Some of them would not have had their Legs at liberty to have brought them into this Assembly, but for me. From them I never hope Forgiveness: I turn my Eyes with loathing from them! *Swift's* Picture of *Tobacconism* dignifies human Nature in Comparison to the View of such Men's Actions. To all you who are placable, I humbly address myself, and implore your Mercy; if I have done any Thing unwittingly to offend you, I ask your Pardon; if you will inform me of my Offence, I will do every Thing else in my Power to make you Reparation. Is it in Man to say or do more?

To the P U B L I C.

Behold at your Feet a faithful Servant, almost worn out, tho' not with Years, yet with severe Toils and cruel Hardships, long endured in the Discharge of the most dangerous, difficult, and invidious of all Employments. I have made many Enemies by my steady adherence to your Interests to the Neglect of my own. They have brought many Charges against me, I have answered them. I hope I stand justified. I have given an honest Account of my whole Stewardship, which I should not have been called upon to produce at this Day, had I been *wise like the Children of this World, and made myself Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*. Look with an Eye of Compassion on your Suppliant, stretch out your hospitable Arms to receive him, and afford him Shelter from the most

cruel Persecution. You are the best Judges of my Services; I can only say, that no Industry or Zeal on my Part were wanting in performing them. On this Account, if on no other you will allow they ought to have met with some Reward. You thought they had. You favoured me with your Countenance, you did your utmost to support me: But alas! You knew not of my Losses, and the heavy Burthens that were upon me. You knew the Terms upon which I undertook the Employment, which were, Freedom to the Stage, under the Protection of the Laws, and the common Rights and Privileges of all *British* Subjects, granted to the Actors. You approved of the Terms, you exerted an uncommon Spirit of Liberty on the Occasion, and by your strenuous Efforts in her Cause, you overthrew Oppression, and subverted old Prejudice: You established a Free Stage. On this Security I ventured my all. I laid out more than came in, upon the Support and Ornament of it. You may judge what my Expences were, when my theatrical Account-Books shew, that in the Space of a few Years, there was expended upon the Wardrobe only, upwards of four Thousand Pounds. During which Time my clear Income did not amount to so much as I should have received for acting only, independent of my Risques and Trouble as a Manager. One fatal Blow destroyed all that I had been doing, and brought an heavy Debt on me, which I have been labouring these four Years to Discharge; and still I find myself a considerable Sum out of Pocket, by the Whole of my Undertaking. As Manager I received no Aids to lighten my Expencc, for tho' formerly the Wardrobe was chiefly supplied by Presents from Ladies and Gentlemen, yet during my whole Time, I have not received Cloaths in that Way, to the Amount of twenty Pounds Value. You will please to reflect that in my Capacity of Actor, you had no Opportunity of
 shewing

shewing me the most distinguishing Mark of your Favour (which other Actors enjoyed) that is, your particular Encouragement at an annual Benefit. If you think that I have any Sort of Merit towards you; if I have contributed in any Shape to your Entertainment; if ever I was found gracious in your Sight, refuse me not my first my only Boon; which is, that you will join with one Voice to intercede with the Grand National Council to receive my Petition, that I may have an Opportunity either to prove the Allegations therein contained, or to take Shame to myself if I fail. As you regard the future Peace and Quiet of this City, as you value the best of your Entertainments, listen to my Request; for remember (hereafter if you neglect the Warning, you will have woeful Cause to remember) I now assert that if two Theatres should open next Winter in this City, the Stage must in a short time sink, never to raise it's Head again in this Kingdom. Grant this one Benefit to grace the Exit of an Actor long happy in your Favour, who during twelve Years has applied to you for none. It will be an Encouragement to others to labour in your Service. And may you ever find Men who in their several Capacities of Manager and Actor, will serve you with that disinterested Zeal which has always swayed the Conduct of

Your very faithful,

Very humble, and

Most devoted Servant,

Thomas Sheridan.

A PRO-

P R O P O S A L

For saving the Stage in *Dublin* from the Ruin with which it is threatened, and establishing it on such a footing as may make it the Source of great Benefits to the Public.

N. B. *Mr. Sheridan intended to have offered this Proposal to the Consideration of Parliament this Winter, but from his want of Knowledge of the Rules of the House, and thro' Hurry of Business, he delayed it till the Time was elapsed that any Money could be granted, but he makes no doubt of meeting with Success in his Application next Sessions.*

After much Thought on the Subject, as well as much Experience, *Mr. Sheridan* thinks that he can lay down this as a Maxim.

That the Dublin Stage never will remain long in a flourishing Condition whilst it is the Property of a private Person.

The Constitution of the Stage of *Paris*, where the Theatre is the Property of the Public, and gives a certain Portion of the Profits to charitable Uses, seems to him the only one that would place that of *Dublin* on a good or durable Foundation.

The Actors there are divided into several Classes, according to their several Degrees of Merit. The Government is a kind of Commonwealth. And the Receipts are divided amongst the several Classes, according to their different Rates of Merit.

Upon a Vacancy in one Class, the best Actor in the next is elected to supply the Place.

Thus

Thus each Individual is interested in the Success of the Entertainment ; their Incomes are larger or smaller in Proportion to the exerting or slackening of their united Endeavours to please. And their Advancement is the Reward of Merit, not Caprice.

In order to establish such a Theatre here, the following PROPOSAL was intended :

That Mr. *Sheridan's* Interest in the Theatres, during the Remainder of the Lease, be purchased by Parliamentary Bounty, upon such Terms as shall be judged reasonable ; together with the Wardrobe, Scenes, and all other Properties whatsoever belonging to him, for the Use of the *Dublin Society*, whose Property they shall become.

That, in Consideration of such Purchase, Mr. *Sheridan* shall undertake, that the Sum of three Pounds *per* Night for every Play, or publick Representation whatsoever, that shall be exhibited in the said Theatres, until the Expiration of said Lease, shall be paid in for the sole Use of the *Dublin Society*, to be by them employed in Premiums, for the Encouragement of the Liberal Arts, or for such other Purposes as they shall think meet. Which Sums of three Pounds *per* Night, according to the usual Number of times of performing, will probably produce an Income of near four hundred Pounds *per Annum*. He will farther undertake, that the Sum of one Pound *per* Night shall be laid aside for supplying the Wardrobe, whenever there may be any Deficiencies, and keeping the Scenery in repair, which, at a moderate Computation, may amount to one hundred and thirty Pounds *per Annum* : And considering the present State of the Scenery and Cloaths, that they are for the most Part new, will be a sufficient Provision to keep them to the Expiration of the Lease, in as good a Condition as they are at present.

Mr. *Sheridan* will farther undertake, that during that Term there shall be four Nights in each Season allotted

allotted for the sole Benefits and Advantage of four publick Charities, viz. the Hospital of Incurables, the Lying-in Hospital, the Hospital in *Meath-street*, and the Infirmary on the *Inns-quay*, without any Cost or Charge to them for the said Benefits. The Receipts of those four Nights will probably not fall short of five hundred Pounds; and thus the Theatre will yield a Fund of one thousand Pounds *per Annum*, to publick and charitable Uses.

If this Proposal is accepted, Mr. *Sheridan* will use his utmost Endeavours, and makes no doubt, but that he shall be able to execute some long-concerted Plans, whereby the Theatre of *Dublin* may be put upon a better footing than any in *Europe*; which may make it a pleasing School of Manners and Instruction to Youth; and a most rational Amusement to the Adult: Which may not only carry the Entertainments exhibited there to a much higher pitch of Perfection, than they can be brought to under the present Circumstances of the Stage, but also fix them upon a solid and durable Foundation.

A

PROPOSAL

Offered to the Consideration of the Subscribers to the Theatre in Crow-street, supposing the above Proposal should take place.

As the Subscribers to the Theatre in *Crow-street* may think it hard to lose their Money intirely, however detrimental the Prosecution of their Scheme may be to the Public, Mr. *Sheridan* begs of them to weigh with Attention the following candid Proposal.

He

He is willing to sacrifice all his future Expectations of any Income from the Theatre; he is willing to give up the Labour of twelve Years, without Gain or Reward of any Kind. He only desires to be placed in the Condition that he was, when he first undertook the Conduct of the Stage, and shall think himself sufficiently recompenced, by the great Benefit which would accrue to the Public, from the establishment of a Theatre upon the above Plan. All he desires of them in return, is, to sacrifice some Part of the unreasonable Expectations, which they have entertained from false Assurances, and chimerical Hopes. In their room he will offer them something Substantial, and more than they are entitled to, from the small Sums they have advanced.

Let all farther Progress in the Theatre of *Crow-Street* be stopped. The Theatre in *Smock-alley* shall be open to Mr. *Barry* next Winter, either at a certain Sallary, superiour to what he ever received yet, at a Moiety of the Profits, or it shall be let to him at reasonable Rent. Early in the next Sessions, let the Subscribers to *Crow-Street* Theatre join Mr. *Sheridan* in an Application to Parliament, for a Fund to establish one good Company of Actors in *Dublin*. Mr. *Sheridan*, tho' he has laid out upwards of nine thousand pounds (which he is ready prove) in bringing the Theatre to it's present State, besides all his Labour, risques, and trouble; is willing to make over his whole Property to the Public, of his Cloaths, Scenes, Interest of his Lease, &c. for the Sum of four thousand Pounds. Let the present Sub-

M

scribers

scribers to *Crow Street*, apply for two thousand to finish their House ; which will make it a more certain Tenure to them, and afford a better Security for their Money, than if it should be finished by future Subscriptions, which will bring such a Load upon it, as no Theatre will long be able to Support. It will be asked, what use is to be made of it? Why this. As the Stage is larger and more grand, let all Tragedies, and such Pieces as require any Magnificence of Show be represented there ; let all the Comedies be performed at *Smock-Alley*. This will occasion an agreeable Variety: Let one good Company be engaged to play in both Houses. Let the Proprietors of the united Theatres, be admitted only to the Plays performed at *Smock-Alley*; the same with respect to those of *Crow-Street*.

Here is a plain Scheme offered, which will put an end to all Hazards, Tumults, and Difficulties ; ensure good Entertainment to the Town; give a greater Security to the Subscribers of both Houses, than either can possibly have from an Opposition, and serve Mr. *Barry's* Interests more effectually, than the present wild Scheme can possibly do. And when all the good Consequences, which will flow from such an Establishment, and the great Use of it, towards promoting the flourishing State of this Metropolis, shall be fully laid open, and submitted to the Consideration of Parliament, there will be no doubt, that they could not lay out six thousand pounds more to the Benefit of the Nation, nor to the Advantage of this City in particular.

If

If this Proposal is rejected, the World will
 whether the Undertakers of *Crow-Street* have
 their own Interest, or that of the Publick most
 Heart ; and whether the Interest of a private
 man does not in their Scale, outweigh that of
 the Publick.

APPENDIX:

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APPENDIX

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Extracts from CIBBER'S Life.

Dublin Edit. Page 56.

I Know it is the common Opinion, That the more Play-houses, the more Emulation; I grant it; but what has this Emulation ended in? Why, a daily Contention which shall soonest surfeit you with the best Plays; so that when what *ought* to please, can no longer please, your Appetite is again to be rais'd by such monstrous Presentations, as dishonour the Taste of a civiliz'd People. If, indeed, to our several Theatres, we could raise a proportionable Number of good Authors, to give them all different Employment, then, perhaps, the Publick might profit from their Emulation: But while good Writers are so scarce, and undaunted Criticks so plenty, I am afraid a good Play, and a blazing Star, will be equal Rarities. This voluptuous Expedient, therefore, of indulging the Taste with several Theatres, will amount to much the same Variety as that of a certain Oeconomist, who, to enlarge his Hospitality would have two Puddings, and two Legs of Mutton, for the same Dinner. —But to resume the Thread of my History.

These two excellent Companies were both prosperous for some few Years, 'till their Variety of Plays began to be exhausted: Then of Course, the better Actors (which the King's seem to have been allow'd) could not fail of drawing the greater Audiences. Sir William Davenant, therefore, Master of the Duke's Company, to make head against their Success, was

forc'd to add Spectacle and Musick to Action; and to introduce a new Species of Plays, since call'd Dramatick Opera's, of which Kind were the *Tempest*, *Psyche*, *Circe*, and others, all set off with the most expensive Decorations of Scenes and Habits, with the best Voices and Dancers.

This sensual Supply of Sight and Sound coming in to the Assistance of the weaker Party, it was no Wonder they should grow too hard for Sense and simple Nature, when it is consider'd how many more People there are, that can see and hear, than think and judge. So wanton a Change of the publick Taste, therefore began to fall as heavy upon the King's Company, as their greater Excellence in Action, had, before, fallen upon their Competitors: Of which Encroachment upon Wit, several good Prologues in those Days frequently complain'd.

But alas! what can Truth avail, when its Dependence is much more upon the Ignorant, than the sensible Auditor? A poor Satisfaction, that the due Praise given to it, must at last, sink into the cold Comfort of———*Laudatur & Alget*. Unprofitable praise can hardly give it a *Soup maigre*. Taste and Fashion with us, have always had Wings, and fly from one publick Spectacle to another so wantonly, that I have been inform'd by those, who remember it, that a famous Puppet-shew in *Salisbury* Change, (then standing where *Cecil-street* now is) so far distress'd these two celebrated Companies, that they are reduc'd to petition the King for Relief against it: Nor ought we perhaps to think this strange, when, if I mistake not, *Terence* himself reproaches the *Roman* Auditors of his Time with the like Fondness for the *Funambuli*, the Rope dancers.

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But alas! the Vanity of applauded Actors, when they are not crowded to, as they may have been

make

makes them naturally impute the Change to any Cause, rather than the true one, Satiety: They are mighty loth to think a Town, once so fond of them, could ever be tired; and yet, at one time or other, more or less thin Houses have been the certain Fate of the most prosperous Actors; ever since I remember the Stage! But against this Evil, the provident Patentees had found out a Relief, which the new House were not yet Masters of, *viz.* Never to pay their People, when the Money did not come in; nor then neither, but in such Proportions as suited their Conveniency. I my self was one of the many, who for six acting Weeks together, never receiv'd one Day's Pay; and for some Years after, seldom had above half our nominal Salaries: But to the best of my Memory, the Finances of the other House held it not above one Season more, before they were reduc'd to the same expedient of making the like scanty Payments.

Such was the Distress, and Fortune of both these Companies, since their Division from the *Theatre-Royal*; either working at half Wages, or by alternate Successes, intercepting the Bread from one another's Mouths; irreconcilable Enemies, yet without Hope of Relief, from a Victory on either Side; sometimes both Parties reduc'd, and yet each supporting their Spirits, by seeing the other under the same Calamity.

During this State of the Stage, it was, that the lowest expedient was made use of, to ingratiate our Company, in the Publick Favour: Our Master, who had some time practis'd the Law, and therefore lov'd a Storm better than fair Weather (for it was his own Conduct chiefly, that had brought the Patent into these Dangers) took nothing so much to Heart, as that Partiality, wherewith he imagin'd the People of Quality had preferr'd the Actors of the other House to those of his own: To ballance this Misfortune, he was resolv'd, at least, to be well with their Domesticks,

ticks, and therefore cunningly opened the upper Gallery to them *gratis*: For before this time no Footman was ever admitted, or had presum'd to come into it, till after the fourth Act was ended: This additional Privilege (the greatest Plague that ever Play-house had to complain of) he conceiv'd would not only incline them to give us a good Word, in the respective Families they belong'd to, but would naturally incite them, to come all Hands aloft, in the Crack of our Applauses: And indeed it so far succeeded, that it often thunder'd from the full Gallery above, while our thin Pit, and Boxes below, were in the utmost Serenity. This riotous Privilege so craftily given, and which from Custom, was at last ripen'd into Right, became the most disgraceful Nuisance, that ever depreciated the Theatre. How often have the most polite Audiences, in the most affecting Scenes of the best Plays, been disturb'd and insulted, by the Noise and Clamour of these Savage Spectators? From the same narrow-way of thinking too, were so many ordinary People, and unlick'd Cubs of Condition, admitted behind our Scenes, for Money, and sometimes without it: The Plagues, and Inconveniences of which Custom, we found so intolerable, when we afterwards had the Stage in our Hands, that at the Hazard of our Lives, we were forced to get rid of them, and our only Expedient was, by refusing Money from all Persons, without distinction, at the Stage Door; by this Means we preserv'd to our selves the Right and Liberty of chusing our own Company there: And by a strict Observance of this Order, we brought what had been before debas'd into all the Licenses of a Lobby, into the Decencies of a Drawing-Room.

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The Suspension of the Patent being thus taken off, the younger Multitude seem'd to call aloud for two Play.

Play-houses ! Many desired another, from the common Notion, that *Two* would always create Emulation, in the Actors (an Opinion, which I have consider'd in a former Chapter.) Others too, were as eager for them, from the natural Ill-will that follows the Fortunate, or Prosperous in any Undertaking. Of this low Malevolence we had, now and then, had remarkable Instances ; we had been forced to dismiss an Audience of an hundred and fifty Pounds, from a Disturbance spirited up, by obscure People, who never gave any better Reason for it, than that it was their Fancy to support the idle Complaint of one rival Actress against another, in their several Pretensions to the chief Part in a new Tragedy. But as this Tumult seem'd only to be the Wantonness of *English* Liberty, I shall not presume to lay any farther Censure upon it.

Now, notwithstanding this publick desire of re-establishing two Houses ; and though I have allow'd the former Actors greatly our Superiors ; and the Managers I am speaking of, not to have been without their private Errors. Yet, under all these disadvantages, it is certain, the Stage, for twenty Years before this Time, had never been in so flourishing a Condition : And it was as evident to all sensible Spectators that this Prosperity could be only owing to their better Order, and closer Industry, now daily observ'd ; and which had formerly been neglected by our Predecessors. But that I may not impose upon the Reader a Merit, which was not generally allow'd us, I ought honestly to let him know, that about this Time, the publick Papers, particularly *Mist's* Journal, took upon them very often to censure our Management, with the same Freedom, and Severity, as if we had been so many Ministers of State : But so it happen'd, that these unfortunate Reformers of the World, these self-appointed *Censors* hardly ever hit upon what was really wrong, in us ; but taking up Facts upon Trust, or Hearsay, piled up many a pompous

pous Paragraph, that they had ingeniously conceiv'd was sufficient to demolish our Administration, or at least, to make us very uneasy in it; which, indeed, had so far its Effect, that my equally-injur'd Brethren *Wilks*, and *Booth*, often complained to me of these disagreeable Aspersions, and propos'd, that some publick Answer might be made to them, which I always oppos'd, by perhaps, to secure a Contempt of what such Writers could do to hurt us; and my Reason for it was, that I knew but of one way to silence Authors of that Stamp; which was, to grow insignificant, and good for nothing, and then we should hear no more of them; But while we continued in the Prosperity of pleasing others, and were not conscious of having deserv'd what they said of us, why should we gratify the little Spleen of our Enemies, by wincing at it, or give them fresh Opportunities to dine upon any Reply they might make to our publicly taking Notice of them? and though Silence might, in some Cases, be a sign of Guilt, or Error confess'd, our Accusers were so low in their Credit and Sense, that the Content we gave the Publick, almost every Day, from the Stage, ought to be our only Answer to them.

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But, in what I have said, I would not be understood to be an Advocate, for two Play-houses: For we shall soon find that two Sets of Actors, tolerated in the same Place, have constantly ended in the Corruption of the Theatre; of which the auxiliary Entertainments that have so barbarously supplied the Defects of weak Action, have for some Years past, been a flagrant Instance; it may not therefore, be here improper to shew how our childish Pantomimes first came to take so gross a Possession of the Stage.

I have upon several Occasions already observ'd, that when one Company is too hard for another, the lower, in Reputation, has always been forc'd to exhibit

hibit some new-fangled Foppery, to draw the Multitude after them: Of these Expedients, Singing and Dancing had formerly been the most effectual; but, at the Time I am speaking of, our *English* Musick had been so discountenanc'd since the Taste of *Italian* Operas prevail'd, that it was to no purpose, to pretend to it. Dancing therefore was, now, the only Weight in the opposite Scale, and as the New Theatre sometimes found their Account in it, it could not be safe for us, wholly to neglect it. To give even Dancing therefore some Improvement, and to make it something more than Motion without Meaning, the Fable of *Mars* and *Venus*, was form'd into a connected presentation of Dances in Character, wherein the Passions were so happily express'd, and the whole Story so intelligibly told, by a mute Narration of Gestures only, that even thinking Spectators allowed it both a pleasing, and a rational Entertainment; tho', at the same Time, from our Distrust of its Reception, we durst not venture to decorate it, with any extraordinary Expence of Scenes, or Habits; but upon the Success of this Attempt, it was rightly concluded, that if a visible Expence in both, were added to something of the same Nature, it could not fail of drawing the Town proportionably after it. From this original Hint then (but every way unequal to it) sprung forth that Succession of Monstrous Medlies, that have so long infested the Stage, and which arose upon one another alternately, at both Houses outvying, in Expence, like contending Bribes on both Sides at an Election, to secure a Majority of the Multitude. But so it is, Truth may complain, and Merit murmur with what Justice it may, the Few will never be a Match for the Many, unless Authority should think fit to interpose, and put down these Poetical Drams, these Gin-shops of the Stage, that intoxicate its Auditors, and dishonour their Understanding, with a Levity for which I want a Name.

If

If I am ask'd (after my condemning these Fooleries myself) how I came to assent, or continue my Share of Expence to them? I have no better Excuse for my Error, than confessing it. I did it against my Conscience! and had not Virtue enough to starve, by opposing a Multitude that would have been too hard for me.

Page 323.

I have so often had occasion to compare the State of the Stage to the State of a Nation, that I yet feel a Reluctancy to drop the Comparison, or speak of the one, without some Application to the other. How many Reigns, then, do I remember, from that of Charles the Second, through all which, there has been, from one half of the People, or the other, a succession of Clamour against every different Ministry for the Time being? And yet, let the Cause of this Clamour have been never so well grounded, it is impossible, but that some of those Ministers must have been wiser, and honestest Men, than others: If this be true, as true, I believe it is, why may I not then say, as some Fool in a French Play does, upon a like Occasion — *Justement, comme chez nous!* 'Twas exactly the same with our Management! let us have done never so well, we could not please every body: All I can say in our Defence, is, that though many good Judges, might possibly conceive how the State of the Stage might have been mended, yet the best of them never pretended, to remember the Time when it was better: or could shew us the way to make their imaginary Amendments practicable.

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In whatever cold Esteem, the Stage may be, among the wise, and powerful; it is not so much a Reproach, to those, who contentedly enjoy it in its lowest Condition,

Condition, as that Condition of it, is to those, who (though they cannot but know, to how valuable a publick Use a Theatre, well establish'd, might be rais'd) yet in so many civiliz'd Nations, have neglected it. This perhaps will be call'd thinking my own wiser, than all the wise Heads, in *Europe*. But I hope a more humble Sense will be given to it; at least I only mean, that if so many Governments have their Reasons, for their Disregard of their Theatres, those Reasons may be deeper, than my Capacity has yet been able to dive into: If therefore my simple Opinion is a wrong one, let the Singularity of it expose me: And though I am only building a Theatre in the Air, it is there, however, at so little Expence, and in so much better a Taste, than any I have yet seen, that I cannot help saying of it, as a wiser Man did (it may be) upon a wiser Occasion:

—*Si quid novisti rectius istis,*
Candidus imperti; si non—

Hor.

Give me leave to play, with my Project, in Fancy.

I say then, that as I allow nothing is more liable to debase and corrupt the Minds of a People, than a licentious Theatre; so under a just, and proper Establishment, it were possible to make it, as apparently the School of Manners, and of Virtue. Were I to collect all the Arguments, that might be given for my Opinion, or to enforce it by exemplary Proofs, it might swell this short Digression to a Volume; I shall therefore trust the Validity of what I have laid down, to a single Fact, that may be still fresh, in the Memory of many living Spectators. When the Tragedy of *Cato* was first acted, let us call to mind the noble Spirit of Patriotism, which that Play then infus'd into the Breasts of a free People, that crowded to it; with what affecting Force, was that most elevated of Human Virtues recommended? Even the false Pretenders to it felt an unwilling Conviction,

B

and

and made it a Point of Honour to be foremost, in their Approbation; and this too at a Time, when the fermented Nation had their different Views of Government. Yet the sublime Sentiments of Liberty in that venerable Character, rais'd in every sensible Hearer such conscious Admiration, such compell'd Assent to the Conduct of a suffering Virtue, as even demanded two almost irreconcilable Parties to embrace, and join in their equal Applauses of it. Now not to take from the Merit of the Writer, had that Play never come to the Stage, how much of this valuable Effect of it must have been lost? It then could have had no more immediate Weight with the Publick, than our poring upon the many antient Authors, through whose Works the same Sentiments have been, perhaps, less profitably dispers'd, tho' amongst Millions of Readers; but by bringing such Sentiments to the Theatre, and into Action, what a superior Lustre did they shine with? There *Cato* breath'd again in Life; and tho' he perish'd in the Cause of Liberty, his Virtue was victorious, and left the Triumph of it in the Heart of every melting Spectator. If Effects like these, are laudable; if the Representation of such Plays can carry Conviction with so much Pleasure, to the Understanding, have they not vastly the Advantage of any other human Helps to Eloquence? What equal Method can be found to lead or stimulate the Mind, to a quicker Sense of Truth and Virtue, or warm a People into the Love and Practice of such Principles, as might be at once a Defence, and Honour to their Country? In what shape could we listen to Virtue with equal Delight or Appetite of Instruction? The Mind of Man is naturally free, and when he is compell'd, or menac'd into any Opinion that he does not readily conceive, he is more apt to doubt the Truth of it, than when his Capacity is led by Delight into Evidence and Reason. To preserve a Theatre in this Strength

and Purity of Morals, is, I grant, what the wisest Nations, have not been able to perpetuate, or to transmit long to their Posterity: But this Difficulty will rather heighten, than take from the Honour of the Theatre: The greatest Empires have decay'd, for want of proper Heads to guide them, and the Ruins of them sometimes have been the Subject of Theatres, that could not be, themselves exempt, from various Revolutions: Yet may not the most natural Inference from all this be, That the Talents requisite to form good Actors, great Writers, and true Judges, were like those of wise and memorable Ministers, as well the Gifts of Fortune, as of Nature, and not always to be found, in all Climes or Ages. Or can there be a stronger modern Evidence of the Value of dramattick Performances, than that in many Countries, where the Papal Religion prevails, the Holy Policy (though it allows not to an Actor Christian Burial) is so conscious of the Usefulness of his Art, it will frequently take in the Assistance of the Theatre, to give even Sacred History in a Tragedy, a Recommendation to the more pathetick Regard of their People. How can such Principles, in the Face of the World, refuse the Bones of a Wretch the lowest Benefit of Christian Charity, after having admitted his Profession (for which they deprive him of that Charity) to serve the solemn Purposes of Religion? How far then is this Religious Inhumanity short of that famous Painter's, who, to make his *Crucifix* a Master-piece of Nature, stabb'd the innocent Hireling, from whose Body he drew it; and having heighten'd the Holy Portrait, with his last Agonies of Life, then sent it to be the consecrated Ornament of an Altar; Though we have only the Authority of common Fame, for this Story, yet be it true, or false, the Comparison will still be just. Or let me ask another Question more humanly political, How came the *Athenians* to lay out an hundred thousand Pounds, upon the Decorations of one single Tragedy

Tragedy of *Sophocles*? Not sure, as it was merely Spectacle for Idleness, or Vacancy of Thought to gaze at, but because it was the most rational, most instructive, and delightful Composition, that human Wit had yet arriv'd at; and consequently the most worthy to be the Entertainment of a wise and warlike Nation: and it may be still a Question, whether the *Sophocles* inspir'd this publick Spirit, or this publick Spirit inspir'd the *Sophocles*?

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To conclude this Digression, If, for the Support of the Stage, what is generally shewn there, must be lower'd to the Taste of common Spectators; or if it is inconsistent with Liberty, to mend that vulgar Taste, by making the Multitude less merry there; or by abolishing every low and senseless Jollity, in which the Understanding can have no Share; whenever I say such is the State of the Stage, it will be as often liable to unanswerable Censure, and manifest Disgrace. Yet there *was* a time, not yet out of many People's Memory, when it subsisted upon its own rational Labours; when even Success attended an Attempt to reduce it to Decency; and when Actors themselves were hardy enough to hazard their Interest, in pursuit of so dangerous a Reformation.

Extracts from CHETWOOD'S History of the Stage,

Page 64.

RAnsford-street Theatre was built, and opened for the first Time, under a Licence granted by the Right Honourable the Earl of Meath, being Part of his Liberties. The first Play that was performed there, was a Comedy call'd

L O V

LOVE for LOVE.

(The Company being under the Directions of Mr. Husband.)

Sir Sampson.	} by	Mr Moore
Valentine		Mr Husband
Tattle		Mr Ravenscroft
Forefight		Mr Bourne
Ben		Mr Sparks
Trapland		Mr Daniel
Jeremy		Mr Roch

Angelica	} by	Mrs Ravenscroft
Mrs Forefight		Mrs Smith
Mrs Frail		Miss Mackay
Miss Prue		Miss Barnes
Nurse		Mrs Talent

I never saw this Theatre, but have been inform'd it was a very neat compact Building, capable of containing a hundred Pounds at common Prices, which they never raised, but at Benefits.

The Company performed here above a Year with tolerable Success, sometimes Neep and sometime Spring Tides. But when *Henry the Eighth* with the pompous Coronation was exhibited at the Theatre in *Aungier street*, they were almost forsaken, good Sense with Show, for once prevailed, which is not always the Case.

As Poverty is the Mother of Invention, all the Wit of the Company went to work, and at last produced a *Mock Coronation*, with less Expence than a Lady's Tail at *Aungier-street Theatre*: It was call'd the *Beggar's Coronation* (and not unworthy that Title) in the Play of the *Royal Merchant*.

As

As the World is fond of Novelty (and this Mock Coronation appearing new) the Stream of Success flowed upon them with a rapid Torrent, swelled their Pockets till they overflowed their Banks, and watered the Fields of many a Publican ! Debts were cleared, and every single Person might fearless look at the Dial on the *Tholsel*.

Their Success went even beyond their Hopes, and *Aungier-street* suffered short Allowance (as they say at Sea) because the Current was turned another Way.

Ibid

However, this Mock Coronation filled *Ransford-street* Theatre, seventeen succeeding Nights. But as Mountain Rivers soon overflow, they as soon sink, and rest in their natural Bed again ; *Ransford-street* was too far out of the way, therefore the Company after three Years Occupation, forlook it.

Page 71.

The Theatre in *Aungier-street* was built by the voluntary Subscription of many of the Illustrious Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom. The first Stone was laid by the Duke of *Dorset*, then Lord Lieutenant, but I think the Architect had more view to the Magnificent, than Theatrical : The Audience Part is ornamented with rich Embellishment, that gives it a superb Countenance, but no Disparagement to the Architect in other Buildings, this might have been more convenient with less Cost. But I believe the Contriver had an Eye more to *Ridottos*, than the *Drama*, if so, indeed his Intentions were answered, for in that shape it may vie with that in the *Hay-market* in *London*. Thrusting my own Opinion in this Manner,

ner, might have the Air of Presumption, if my Employment and Observation had not taken up full thirty Years of my Time : In other Buildings, I would not pretend to give my Judgment on a Pigeon-House, or a Centry Box, or give Directions in erecting a thatched Cabin, or a Turnpike.

Aungier-street Theatre opened *March* the 9th, 1733-4, with the Comedy of the *Recruiting Officer*, the Parts acted as follows,

Captain Plume	}	by	Mr J. Elrington
Justice Ballance			Mr Layfield
Captain Brazen			Mr R. Elrington
Worthy			Mr Watfon
Kite			Mr Vanderbank
Bullock			Mr F. Elrington
1st Recruit			Mr Reed
2d Recruit			Mr Butler
Silvia	}	by	Mrs Bellamy
Melinda			Mrs Wrightson
Lucy			Mrs Reynolds
Rose			Mrs Moreau

These were the main Body of the Theatrical Army in its first March, tho' several Auxillaries join'd them afterwards.

The Theatre in *Smock-Alley* was built by a voluntary Subscription. The Architect has considered the Building more for the real Intention of the Proprietors, I mean for Profit: The *Cavea*, or that Part where the Audience sit, is much more convenient, than that of *Aungier-street*, and will contain a Fifth Part more in Number than the latter, altho' it does not appear so to the Eye. On the contrary, the Stage is more cramp'd for want of Room, which might have been otherwise at the first building.

When

When I came first from *England*, in the Year 1741, I brought over an experienc'd *Machine*, who altered the Stage, after the Manner of the Theatres in *France* and *England*, and formed a Machine to move the Scenes regularly all together ; but it is since laid aside, as well as the Flies above, which were made as convenient as the Theatre would admit. However the present Manager has form'd it as Regular and Convenient as the Spot would allow of ; decorated it with all the Elegance of the *Theatres* abroad, with proper Scenery and Habits, that her elder Sisters in *England* need not blush at the Figure she makes.

This new Theatre opened with a Comedy called *Love makes a Man ; or the Fop's Fortune*.

The Parts played as follows,

Don Antonio	} by {	Mr Dash
Don Charino		Mr Bourne
Carlos		Mr Ward
Don Lewis		Mr Wetherilt,
Don Duart		Mr Cashel
Clody		Mr Sparks
Governor		Mr Redman
Sancho		Mr Barington
Elvira	} by {	Miss Boucher
Lovisa		Mrs Ward
Angelina		Miss Barnes

But so eager were they to open (or to get Money) that they began to play, before the back Part of the House was tyl'd in, which the Town knowing, they had not half an Audience the first Night ; but mended leisurely by Degrees, where we shall leave them on the mending Hand, and walk to

CAPEL-STREET.

CAPEL-STREET.

This Theatre was built, like an aggrieved People in the State of Rebellion; their Forces raised in a Hurry, neither well cloathed, armed, or paid; their Fortifications so slightly thrown up, that did not promise a long Defence, tho' they had a Veteran at their Head, that might have taught them Discipline, had he taken proper Pains with his raw Soldiers, or rather indeed, had they been more capable of being taught, but this hasty Building was erected in the great Cause of Liberty!

*The Love of Liberty with Life is given,
And Life itself's th' inferior Gift of Heaven.*

This Company open'd under the Sanction of the Lord Mayor of *Dublin*, and called themselves the *City Company of Comedians*. Their first Play was *Shakespear's Merchant of Venice*.

Duke	}	by	Mr Rivers	
Morochius		Mr Brouden		
Antonio		Mr Townsend		
Bassanio		Mr Marshal		
Gratiano		Mr Hall		
Lorenzo		Mr Corry		
Shylock		Mr Wright		
Tubal		Mr Bourne		
Launcelot	}		Mr Morgan	
Portia		}	by	Mrs Brouden
Nerissa			Mrs Phillips	
Jessica			Miss Lewis	

I shall leave the further Mention of this Theatre to the Memoirs of the worthy Projector of it, *Harlequin Phillips*.

C

A Vindication

A Vindication of the Conduct of the
late Manager of the Theatre-Royal.
Humbly address'd to the Publick.*

ON *Friday* Morning, the Day preceding the intended Performance of the Play of *Mabomet*, The Manager called the Company of Performers together, and delivered a Speech to this Effect to them, from some Heads which he had wrote down.

I AM sorry to find that Party has become so universal in *Dublin*, as to make it's Appearance visibly on the Stage. I am sure that is a most improper Place for it, on which account I think it my Duty to lay before you, the Rule by which you ought to act at this Juncture. I do not pretend to dictate to you in your private Capacities; every Man born under our happy Constitution, has a Right to think as he pleases, and speak his Sentiments; provided, they are not repugnant to the Laws of the Land, and the Rules of Civil Society. But in your Theatrical Character, I have an undoubted Right, at least to advise you. I lay it down then as a Maxim, that the Business of an Actor is to divest himself as much as possible of his private Sentiments, and to enter, with all the Spirit he is Master of, into the Character he represents; and this is an indisputable Claim which the Publick in general have upon him. But if an Actor, in order to please Part of that Publick, should by any unusual Emphasis, Gesture, or significant Look, mark out a Passage in his Part (which at another Juncture he would have passed by lightly) as a Party Stroke, He in that Instance steps out of his feigned Character into his natural one, than which nothing can be more disgusting or insolent to any Auditor, who came with

* This Vindication was published four Years ago, and is now reprinted, in order to set Matters in a clear Light, with those who had not then an Opportunity of being informed of them.

no other Intent but that of seeing the Play. Such a Performer ought to be looked upon by the Publick, as an Incendiary, as one who throws the Brand of Disorder amongst them; for, supposing Persons of a different Way of thinking should take it into their Head to resent, and oppose this Behaviour, the Theatre in that Case, instead of being a Place of Pleasure and Entertainment, would become a Scene of Riot and Disorder. I was in Hopes that the Example I had set upon this Occasion, would have had so much Influence as to make Admonitions unnecessary; for whatever my private Sentiments may have been, I defy any Person to charge me justly, that the least Glimpse of them appeared in my Conduct, either as a Manager or an Actor. I understood my Duty to the Publick too well; it is my Business to take all the Precautions, and Care in my Power, that the Audience shall enjoy their Entertainment in Peace, and not by any Act to mine to encourage and foment Party Feuds. Indeed I laid it down as a fixed Resolution to observe in my publick Capacity a strict Neutrality. I determined to exhibit Plays in the same Order which I should have done, had the Town been intirely free from Party, and as on the one Hand I would lay no old Play aside, lest it might bear an Application to the Times, so on the other I would revive none purely to serve that End. For tho' I knew many Plays, that in the present Disposition of People, would have filled my House many Nights and consequently my Purse, yet I should have looked upon myself in so doing as a Time-server, a Prostituter of the Stage, and a Betrayer of the Rights of the Publick.

Though it must be allowed, that the Rule I had laid down for my Conduct, was the fittest to be observed by the Manager of a Free Stage, yet I was far from escaping Censure. Persons of both Parties often took Offence at Passages which they themselves applied, and Conclusions were drawn, that the Play was played on Purpose, &c.

And indeed this was unavoidable ; for Plays in general being Pictures of Life, and Tragedies mostly of high Life, and of Persons concerned in State Affairs, it was not possible but that many Incidents Characters and Sentiments might bear Application from Minds bias'd by Party. This is more particularly the Case with our *English* Plays, whose Authors have chosen more Subjects, and written more freely upon Government than any other Nation under the Sun. You all know that the Parts of the Play of *Mahomet* were delivered out, and the Representation of it intended last Year. But before it could be got ready, the Season was so far advanced, that it was thought not prudent to hazard the Performance of a new Play to thin Audiences. The necessary Amputations, practis'd on every Play, were performed at different Times on this, at Rehearsals, according as the Scenes were found tedious in repeating, and many of them were done at the Request of the Actors concern'd in the Scenes. I do not remember that any Performer during the several Readings and Rehearsals took notice of any Passage that might be applicable, or any Sentiment that might be term'd Party one ; and yet they are generally as sagacious in finding out such things as most People ; indeed the Point of Story Characters, Incidents, and Moral, considered it as one of the most unexceptionable Plays that could be perform'd. And after having several Times look'd it over again with the utmost Attention I own myself stupid enough to be still of the same way of thinking ; nor can I see how the Tragedy itself or any Part of it can be applied to the present Time without great straining of the Sense and Words. However as some Persons judg'd otherwise, I thought proper to lay it by awhile, that People might have Time to read and examine it coolly ; if that be done, make no doubt but all Prejudices will be effac'd. I have therefore ventur'd to give it once more to the Publick.

Publick, directly *as it was perform'd before*, without *Diminution, Alteration, or Addition* of a Syllable.

As it was at the Representation of this Play, that an Innovation was attempted, and given Way to, never known before in the Theatre, I think it my Duty to lay before you my Sentiments, upon the dangerous Consequences which may attend it, to the Stage in general, and to all Actors in particular. I mean a Right claimed by the Audience, to encore Speeches in Plays.

If it be once established as a Rule, that one Part of an Audience have a Right to encore a Speech, upon the same Principle, any other Part of that Audience may claim the same Right.

If they have a Right to have it once repeated, why not several times, as well as once? Why not any other Speech as well as that one? And why not as many Speeches as they shall think proper?

If one Party should encore a Speech, because they think it makes for their Purpose, may not another Party encore as many as they think will make for them? Nay, may they not from a mere Spirit of Opposition encore every Speech, as often as they shall think proper? In this Case, I do not see how we should be able to get thro' one Act of a Play.

If one Part of an Audience should cry out *Encore*, have not the rest an undoubted Right to cry out, *No more*, as the first Claim is neither founded on Reason or Custom? In such a Case, is not an Actor certain of disobliging one Party or other? And is he not liable to the Repentment and ill Treatment of one or the other?

In such a Situation the Actors would be in a much worse Condition than the Musicians formerly were. We all know the dreadful Usage they met with, in Consequence of a Claim of that Nature from the Galleries. They assumed a Right of calling for what Tunes they pleased, but not always agreeing upon the Tune, one Party roared out for one, and the other

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was as clamorous for another ; as the Musicians could not possibly play both together, they thought that playing them one after another would satisfy all Parties, but that would not do. If they play'd the one, the Advocates for the other thought they had a Right to Precedence, and saluted them with a Volley of Apples and Oranges. At last the Outrage rose to such an Height, that they threw Glass Bottles, and Stones, cut several of the Performers, and broke their Instruments. Then there was no Resource found, but that of ordering the Band never to go into the Box, but to play behind the Scenes, at least till the Pit was so full that they might be protected. This Expedient being often put in practice, put an End to the Claim, and the Band afterwards performed such Pieces as were allotted to them without Interruption. But the Actors could not possibly have such an Asylum ; they cannot play their Parts behind the Scenes, their Duty obliges them to a Post open to the Battery of an incensed Multitude, some of whom would shower their Resentment on them thro' Malevolence or personal Pique, others thro' mere Wantonness. Nor is this an imaginary or unlikely Thing ; every one who remembers the State of the Stage before it was rescued from Slavery, must know that the Thing often happened, merely thro' private Resentment.

In short, if this new Claim is to be forced down our Throats, I do not see where the Matter will end. I know not why new Claims may not be made every Night ; I know not why they may not insist upon Performers doing whatever they please, and in that Case, I know no human Being in so deplorable a State of Slavery as an Actor would be.

In short, this is a Blow struck at the very Vitals of the Stage, calculated to destroy all Taste in the Audience, and Spirit in the Performers, to breed perpetual Feuds and Divisions amongst the Spectators, and entail perpetual Slavery upon the Actors. I hope you have all too great a Sense of Liberty, and have the Good

of the Society too much at Heart, to encourage so fatal an Encroachment upon your Rights; and in that Hope I shall leave you entirely free, to act as you think proper, wishing that your Conduct may rather be the Result of a manly Sense of Freedom, than Obedience to an Order. In all new Cases, indeed, I would rather persuade than direct, convince than command.

To you, Mr. *Digges*, I must particularly apply, as you were the first Tragedian I ever heard of, who repeated a Speech upon the Encore of an Audience. I am in Hopes it was the suddenness of the Thing, and want of Time to reflect upon the ill Consequences which might attend it, that led you into it. You have now heard my Arguments upon that Head; if you think they are of weight, I suppose you will act accordingly; if not, remember I do not give you any Order upon this Occasion, you are left entirely *free to act as you please*.

After the Manager had read this to the Company, Mr. *Digges* asked him, Whether if he should repeat the Speech upon the Encore, the Manager would shew any Resentment to him, and he declared he would not.

The Night after the Manager had delivered his Sentiments in the above Speech, the Play of *Mabomet* was to have been performed; the Curtain was drawn up, and one of the first Speeches of *Alcanor* encor'd. Mr. *Digges* advanced, and told the Audience, that he was ever ready to oblige the Publick, but that he had very strong Reasons against repeating the Speech, and hoped and entreated that they would not insist upon it. At this there arose a very general Cry of *No! no! the Manager! the Manager, &c.* which continued for a long time with great Clamour. The Manager heard the whole at the Side of the Scenes, and immediately ordered the Curtain down. He sent the Prompter to acquaint the Audience, that they were ready to perform the Play, if it were suffered to go on in Quiet;
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if not, that they were at Liberty to take their Money again. The Prompter was not heard, and obliged to withdraw. The Manager then declared his Resolution of not going on the Stage, retired to his Dressing-room, undressed himself and went home. What followed is a Matter pretty well known to the Publick; the Sum of which is, that after having waited a considerable Time, the Gentlemen in the Pit desired the Ladies to withdraw, and then proceeded to tear up the Benches, pull down the Wainscot, and destroy every Thing in the Audience Part of the Theatre. They then mounted the Stage, the Curtain was set fire to in two Places, but the Flame was put out, and it was cut to Pieces. All the Scenes within reach were entirely demolished. A Party was detached to attack the Ward-robe, but the Precaution of the Carpenters in barricadoing the Passage to it, and the Resolution of a Centinel preserved it. When the Gentlemen were withdrawn, the Mob forced their Way into the House, Part of whom plundered and stole whatever they could carry away, others drew the large Grate in the Box room from it's Place into the Floor, and heaping the Benches and Wainscot upon the Fire, would soon have consumed the House, and probably that whole Quarter of the Town, as the Buildings stand so close there, had not this Sight roused six of the Servants belonging to the Theatre to a desperate Courage: At the immediate Hazard of their Lives, they assaulted and drove the Mob out of the House, extinguished the Flames, barricadoed the Doors, and afterwards dispersed the Mob, by firing out of the Windows upon them. During this whole Transaction, which lasted from eight at Night till two in the Morning, there was no Peace Officer to be found in the City of *Dublin*, though Numbers were in quest of them, and though the Town Major was several Hours traversing the whole Town in search of

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Thus far is a mere Narrative of Facts : The Speech made to the Actors by Mr. *Sheridan*, the whole Company were Witnesses to ; the rest every one who was at the Theatre that Night knows to be true, and he has advanced nothing but what is supported by the strongest Evidence.

As the Facts have been variously reported, and the Reasonings from them consequently as various, Mr. *Sheridan* has made it his Business to enquire what the Sentiments of the Town have been upon this Occasion, and he finds upon the whole, that their Enquiries are confin'd to two Points, *viz.*

First, Why he repeated the Play of *Mahomet* ?

Secondly, Why he did not appear upon the Stage at the Call of the Audience ?

As to the first, the Publick may be assur'd, had the Manager foreseen any of the ill Consequences that attended it, he never would voluntarily have run upon such a Rock. After it was first performed, hearing that many People had term'd it a Party Play, he consulted some of the coolest, and most sensible of his Friends, whether he should give it out again. They told him, " They could see no Reason, why he should lose all the Advantage of the Time, and Labour, which it cost him and the Company to prepare this Play ; nor why the Publick should be depriv'd of a good Entertainment, because about twenty Persons in a former Audience had stamped the Name of a party Play upon it, when in Fact it is one of the most free from it of any in our Language. That his declining to play it any more would look like a tacit Confession, that he himself look'd upon it in that Light. That if a few general Sentiments in a Play, were sufficient to constitute it a Party one, they feared the Publick would be deprived of the Pleasure of seeing most of the best Tragedies in our Language, and the Manager's Stock of Plays would be so reduced, that he would

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" scarce

" scarce be able to keep the Business a going, a
 " least with any Advantage to himself. That the
 " would have him by all Means to stick to his old
 " Rule, by which he had conducted himself the
 " whole Season, not to revive any Play with a View
 " to Party, nor to lay any aside, which had been
 " play'd, on account of particular Application being
 " made."

Mr. *Sheridan* owns he thought these Reasons of
 great Weight. He was quickned in his Resolutions
 by receiving many Messages, that the Play was de-
 sired, and at last by hearing that unless it was soon
 performed it would be insisted on: To prevent which
 he thought it would come with a better Grace if he
 did it voluntarily.

As to the other Question, why he did not appear
 upon the Call of the Audience? He has to say in
 his Defence, that many Reports had reached his
 Ears that he was to be called for in Case Mr. *Digges*
 should not repeat any Speech they encour'd, and
 should meet with the most cruel Treatment. He
 owns he could scarce think this possible; for after
 Mr. *Sheridan* had left Mr. *Digges* at Liberty to do as
 he thought proper, he could not conceive how the
 Manager was in any shape accountable for his Con-
 duct. The only Pretence for calling for the Mana-
 ger was a Supposition, that he had given Mr. *Digges*
 Orders not to repeat any Speech upon an Encore;
 but this was obviated by what Mr. *Sheridan* had said
 to Mr. *Digges* before the Company, the preceding
 Morning. It is to be supposed, that Mr. *Digges* had
 made his Friends acquainted with this of whom he
 that Night declared from the Stage, that he had
 the Honour of seeing a great Number in the Pit.
 But to put this Matter out of all Doubt, Mr. *Adderley*
 has been so kind as to desire I will make Use of his
 Name upon this Occasion. He went into the Pit,
 and asked aloud some Gentlemen whom he saw in
 a Knot what they meant to do? They said, they
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would call for the Manager. He asked upon what Pretence? They said, because he had forbid Mr. Digges to repeat any Speech upon an Encore. He told them he took upon him to affirm that the Fact was not so, for that he had conversed with Mr. Sheridan upon that Subject the Day before, who had declared to him, that he had told Mr. Digges publicly, that he would give him no Orders upon that Head, but should leave him free to act as he should think proper. After this they assigned no other Reason to Mr. Adderley, and yet persisted in calling for the Manager. The whole Behaviour of the Galleries that Night, before the Curtain was drawn up, convinced him that they were not much prejudiced in his Favour. He entirely acquits the Gentlemen of the Pit, of any Intention to attack him personally, but he begs leave to say that he could not answer for the Behaviour of the Galleries, nor prevent any Insult, or Assaults which they might offer from those Places, as they might do it, not only with Impunity, but without Fear of Discovery. He had heard from various Quarters, that there was an Intention of assaulting him, not only with Apples and Oranges, but with Stones and Glass Bottles: That they came prepared with such Implements is past all Doubt, many Persons having since declar'd that they saw them thrown upon the Stage. But to establish this Fact beyond all Controversy, the Reader is desired to turn to the Affidavits at the End of this Paper. In such a Situation the Manager thought the most prudent Thing he could do was to withdraw. Mr. Adderley followed him to his Dressing-Room from the Pit, and as what pass'd between that Gentleman and him, upon this Occasion, has been much misrepresented, he has his Permission to publish the following Account of it. Mr. Adderley advis'd Mr. Sheridan to go on the Stage, and he would undertake that the Gentlemen of the Pit would offer no Insult to him. Mr. Sheridan re-

ply'd, that he had not the least Apprehensions of any ill Treatment from the Gentlemen in the Pit, that his Fears were from the Behaviour of the Galleries, and that he had but too just Grounds for those Fears. That he would not put Mr. *Adderley* into so disagreeable a Situation, for should Mr. *Sheridan* go upon the Stage under his Sanction, and receive perhaps an irreparable Injury by the loss of an Eye, or any other Damage, he knew Mr. *Adderley* so well, that his Humanity must be shock'd at it all his Life after. That no Body knew better than he the Principles upon which Mr. *Sheridan* undertook the Conduct of the Theatre, as he not only openly approv'd of, and abetted those Principles, but at the Hazard of his Life, and with the Assistance of his Purse, supported him in the Prosecution of a Scheme which he judged would be of great Publick Utility. That he knew his Resolution never to continue longer in the Management of the Theatre, than he could support it under a Regulation established at a vast Expence of Money, and after one of the strongest Contests ever known in any Country upon a like Occasion. That he was sorry to say that the Hour was now come, when he could no longer support the Stage upon a Footing which all the World had approv'd of for many Years, and that therefore he was determin'd to withdraw. That he should take another Opportunity of convincing him that he was now drove to the fatal Necessity he mentioned, but he was at present under too much Perturbation of Mind, to be able to do it so clearly as he could wish. Mr. *Adderley* then said, he was sorry his Mediation could be of no service upon this Occasion, and since he found that to be the Case, he would return no more to the Pit, but go directly home. Afterwards upon hearing that Mr. *Sheridan*'s Life was in Danger, so great was his Humanity, that he went with all speed to the Theatre determin'd to protect him at the Hazard of his own Person.

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Mr. Sheridan takes this Opportunity of making his publick Acknowledgment to that Gentleman for the numberless Favours he has received at his Hands. There is no one living to whom he lies under such strong, and personal Obligations. He never has, nor probably ever will have it in his Power to make a suitable Return. He therefore hopes that he will kindly accept of all that is in his Power, the sincere Thanks of a Heart overflowing with Gratitude. A Love of doing publick Good, which is the distinguishing Character of that Gentleman, was upon a particular Occasion, the Means of procuring *Mr. Sheridan* the Honour of his Acquaintance; and he has from that Day to this invariably persisted in his good Offices towards him. He looks upon it as no small Vindication of his Conduct, against any Calumnies or Aspersions which may be thrown out against him, that a Man of so much Worth has been a Witness to his Actions and Designs since his first setting out in Life, and has never deserted him.

But to return to the Subject. *Mr. Sheridan* will now lay before the Publick some of the Reasons which appear'd convincing to him at least, that it was necessary for him to leave the Stage. He was call'd upon in the most unprecedented Manner ever known in this Theatre, to appear before the Audience, previous to the Time of his coming on in his Character, without any Fault objected to him, or any Colour of Pretence but what was before obviated. The Gentlemen of the Pit were not angry with *Mr. Sheridan* for having the Play perform'd, on the contrary they seem'd highly satisfy'd with it. Were they angry with him then because *Mr. Digges* did not obey their Order in repeating the Speech? This was indeed great Tenderneſs to the Actor, but sure it was very hard upon the Manager. *Mr. Digges* said, "He had Reasons—— Why was he not asked those Reasons? Why did not the Audience shew their Resentment to him, unless
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he comply'd with their Demand, or assign'd the Cause for his not doing it? Had Mr. *Digges* said that it was by the Manager's Direction he refus'd to repeat the Speech, there might have been some Pretext to call for the Manager to know why he had given him such a Direction? Was he called for then to assign Mr. *Digges*'s Reasons? That would be a hard Task for him to do. There could be no other probable Conjecture why he was called for but to give Mr. *Digges* an Order in the Face of the Audience to repeat that Speech. This was impossible for the Manager to comply with; for after what he had said to the Company upon that Head, he must have appear'd contemptible in their eyes, and never more could have had Authority over them; he must entirely have destroy'd the Constitution of the Stage, in the Preservation of which he was so deeply interested; and lastly he must have betray'd the Rights of the Publick, for which he might with just Reason expect to draw their Resentment upon him. To set this Matter in a clear Light, suppose the Manager had comply'd, and given such Directions; might not another Audience have come on the next Night, and demanded, How he dared to give his Sanction to such an Innovation upon their Rights: How he dared to establish a new Rule that must be productive of the worst Consequences, destroy their Entertainment, and be the Source of perpetual Feuds, and Divisions amongst the Audience? If they should add that they no longer thought him a fit Person to be entrusted with the Management of the Theatre, he confesses he could have nothing to offer in his Defence, but should acknowledge the Justice of their Sentence. As therefore it was impossible for the Manager to comply, his Refusal must have irritated and inflam'd such as were determin'd to carry the Point, and the Consequence might have proved fatal to him;

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he therefore thought the most prudent Step he could take was to withdraw.

This is all that Mr. *Sheridan* chuses to say in his Vindication; that more might be said, will probably be obvious to every Reader. But he has studiously avoided even touching upon Points that might inflame Minds already but too warm. The same Principle which made him sacrifice all Regard to his private interest, and the whole Scheme of his Life, influences him now, rather to run the Risque of being thought culpable, than by too strong a Defence blow up the Fire of Discord, which already rages but too violently in this unhappy Country. What he has said he humbly submits to the Consideration of the Publick: they will judge impartially. He does not pretend to Infallibility; perhaps he has been wrong in his Conduct; he will only say that he acted to the best of his Knowledg, and what he did was from the Conviction of his Mind; nor can his making so great a Sacrifice be accounted for upon any other Principle.

But now to take the other Side of the Question, Let it be taken for granted that the Manager was wrong in what he did, yet surely he cannot help thinking that the Punishment was rather too severe, and no way adequate to his Crime. Suppose he had no real Foundation for his Apprehensions, but from a mere Panick which struck him, did not care to expose himself to a Danger which appear'd to him imminent, and inevitable; was this a Crime of so heinous a Nature that nothing but the entire Ruin of his Fortune, and Loss of his Life could make Atonement for it? For tho' he cannot think that he should have fallen by the Hands of Gentlemen, yet what Reason has he to suppose, that an incensed Mob would have spared his Life, when they used their utmost Endeavours to burn his House? He cannot help thinking it was hard that so many innocent Persons should suffer for the sake of one guilty one. That the whole Com-
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pany of Performers, and all the Persons belonging to the Theatre with their Families, to the amount of between two and three hundred Souls, should be deprived of their daily Bread. Had the Theatre been consumed by Fire, and in Consequence thereof, probably that whole Quarter of the Town reduced to Ashes, he fears it would be no satisfactory Answer to a Number of Families, who must have thereby been reduced to Want and Beggary, when they enquired, what was the Cause of all this? to say, that it was owing to the Obstinacy of a Manager, who refused to appear upon the Call of an Audience, through a groundless Apprehension that he might have had his Brains beat out. He is sure at least that this Answer could make them no Reparation for irretrievable Damages. He humbly conceives, that had he offended the Publick, Methods of a more gentle Nature might as effectually have brought him to a Sense of his Duty, without the Risque of injuring any innocent Person. He cannot help thinking, that had he committed a much more flagrant Crime than the one laid to his Charge, that eight Years indefatigable Pains in the Service of the Publick, during which Time he was never once charged with being remiss in his Duty, either as a Manager, or an Actor, might have intitled him to some little Favour from the Audience. He cannot think that his refusing to appear before them, upon a new Claim, never made before, that of calling for a Manager, without any Fault objected to him, especially when a Part of that Audience had behaved all Night in the most tumultuous Manner, and openly avowed their Enmity to him, was a Crime of such a Nature as to admit of no Palliation. He knows no Reason why the fairest, as well as worst Construction might not have been put upon his Conduct; nor can he see any ill Consequences that could possibly attend it, had they delayed passing Sentence upon it till

he had a fair Hearing before the Publick in Print, the only proper and equitable Way that a Manager can defend himself when he is accused. He believes it will be allowed him universally, that it is not impossible that a particular Audience may be partial, as well as a Jury may be packed, and that in such a Case, a Manager has an undoubted Right of Appeal to the Publick. He cannot but think, that though he had been ever so wrong in what he did, the Loss of that Night's Receipt, amounting to one hundred and thirty Pounds, would have been a sufficient Punishment for his Folly; and if he did not fully acquit himself before the next time of his appearing, the Audience would still have the same Method of Punishment in their Hands, unless he acknowledg'd his Error. These are his Sentiments upon the whole; perhaps he may be wrong in them; the Audience thought so, they pass'd Sentence upon him, put it in Execution, and he acquiesces under it. Is not this sufficient? Must he suffer more-yet? Must he be persecuted in private Life? Is not the Destruction of his Fortune sufficient, but must an Army of Writers endeavour to blacken and calumniate his Character? Surely this is not just, this is not humane or Christian-like. He begs Quarter from those merciless Enemies, he lets them know, that they are attacking a disarmed, naked Man, who is determin'd to make no Defence, and if they still persist, at the Expence of their own Humanity be it.

If there be any Thing offensive in what he has written, he assures the Publick it was contrary to his Intention; and he hopes the Reader will pardon any other Faults which may be in this Paper, when he tells him it was drawn up under great Grief of Heart, and Uneasiness of Mind. The Blows of Fortune he can bear with Patience; but there are other Strokes, which he owns himself not Stoick enough to endure without feeling.

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He begs Permission to say a few Words more to the Publick, and then will take his Leave.

After one of the hardest Struggles ever known in any Age or Country, upon such an Occasion, to establish a new Constitution in a Stage reduced to the lowest Ebb, and full of Disorders; after many more Struggles, Difficulties, and Hazards run in support of that Constitution; after having gained his Point, to the entire Satisfaction of the Publick; after eight Years incessant Labour, both of Body and Mind, in order to make this one of the most flourishing Theatres in *Europe*, the Accomplishment of which Design was near at hand; after great Losses sustained in his first Attempt, which he did not get over for some Years, and great Burthens removed, which loaded the Theatre, when he first undertook it: after having laid out more than nine thousand Pounds in Alterations, Improvements, additional Buildings, Scenery, and Wardrobe, which has hitherto prevented him from reaping any Profit of his Labours, Mr. *Sheridan* finds himself drove to the Necessity of parting with the Theatre at a very unlucky Time, and under very disadvantageous Circumstances. The great Scheme of his Life is defeated by one Blow, and the Fruits of eight Years indefatigable Pains blasted in one Night. He wakes as from a Dream, and finds that the best, and most vigorous of his Years, have been employed to no Purpose: He is much in the same Condition as when he set out, except that his Constitution, formerly a good one, is greatly impaired and broken by incessant Labour. Persecuted by implacable Enemies, abandoned by many pretended Friends, who have given him up without so much as hearing what he had to say, and daily experiencing the blackest Instances of Ingratitude from Persons most obliged to him, he must now look out for a new Scene of Life, a new Country, and new Friends. He wishes from his Soul, that the Publick may have a better Manager to conduct

duct the Theatre, and a better Actor to entertain them; but he will venture to affirm, that they will never find one who can serve them with more Assiduity, Perseverance, and Zeal, than their

Ever devoted,

And faithful Servant,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

JOHN FAGAN, Freeman of the City of *Dublin*, came before me this Day and made Oath, that he saw two Brick-bats thrown on the Stage of the Theatre-Royal in *Smock-alley*, on *Saturday* Night the second instant; and this Deponent believes they were thrown by Persons who were then in the Galleries of said Theatre.

Sworn before me *March* 11th, 1754.

John Fagan.

JOHN COOKE.

EDWARD DOYLE of the City of *Dublin*, came this Day before me and made Oath, that he saw several Glass Bottles thrown on the Stage of the Theatre-Royal in *Smock-alley*, on *Saturday* Night the second instant; and this Deponent believes they were thrown by Persons that were then in the Galleries of said Theatre.

Sworn before me *March* 11th, 1754.

Edward Doyle.

JOHN COOKE.

JAMES LOWNDES of the City of *Dublin*, Carpenter, came this Day before me and made Oath, that he is one of the Persons employed in repairing the Theatre-Royal in *Smock-alley*, and that on clearing the Stage he found several Glass Bottles, Brick-bats, Stones and Oranges,

Sworn before me *March 11th, 1754.*

James Lowndes.

JOHN COOKE

JOHN WIMP of the City of *Dublin*, Carpenter came this Day before me, and made Oath, that he is one of the Carpenters employed in repairing the Theatre-Royal in *Smock-alley*, from the Havock that was made there on *Saturday Night* the second instant, and that on clearing the Stage he saw on the Stage a great many Brick-bats, Stones, broken Glass Bottles, and Oranges.

Sworn before me *March 11th, 1754.*

John Wimp.

JOHN COOKE

Extracts from a Letter written by Mr. Sheridan, to a Gentleman of Consequence in this Country, at a time when he had no Expectation of returning to Ireland.

Dear Sir, *London.*

SINCE I left *Ireland* I have as much as possible turned my Thoughts from that Country; and indeed as neither any Recollection of the past, nor View of the present Situation of Affairs there could be attended with any thing but Pain, it was the wisest Course I could pursue. At this distance of Time, after having examin'd in the coolest and most

I dispassionate Manner, my whole Conduct there, I find nothing to reproach myself with, but an unwarrantable Neglect of my own Interest, and that of my Family, whilst I was pursuing a Point, with a warmth too romantic for the present Times, which I judged would be of great publick Benefit. That this was my principal Object in view, my Actions sufficiently demonstrated; and as I must be the best Judge of the Motive to those Actions, I cannot but think that the Return I met with was cruel to the last Degree. However, as impotent Resentment is at best vain, and when exerted against that most unfeeling of all Bodies, the Publick, always ridiculous, I have chosen to acquiesce with a philosophic Patience, and to look upon the Ruin brought on me, as if it were the Consequence of an Earthquake, Fire, Plague, or any other irresistible Decree of Providence. For the same Reason I have given myself no Trouble to oppose the many Reports which have been raised in *Dublin* to my Disadvantage since my Departure; I know too well by Experience, how vain are the Endeavours of a fallen Man to oppose the Torrent of Malice, and how fruitless the Labour to cut off the Hydra Heads of Falshood; and indeed I was totally indifferent as to what such People said or thought of me. But as there are still some worthy Persons there, whose Goodness I experienced at the Time of my greatest Need, in their Memory I would wish to live as one not unworthy of their Favours; to them I shall ever think myself accountable for my Conduct, nor shall I ever by any bad Action give them Occasion to blush for interesting themselves in my Cause, and appearing it's avowed Supporters. As to the first of this Number, my Gratitude to Mr. A——y is deeply imprinted on my Heart; nor should I have failed to have made frequent Expressions of it, but that the Words of the sincere Man and the Hypocrite appear the same upon Paper; and indeed the

Hypo-

‘ Hypocrite has them so much more at command,
 ‘ and makes such frequent Use of them, that it has
 ‘ brought a kind of Discredit upon mere wordy Ac-
 ‘ knowledgments. However, I should have wrote
 ‘ to you long since upon another Principle, as flatter-
 ‘ ing myself that you interested yourself in the Event
 ‘ of my Designs, but that I deferred it from time to
 ‘ time till I might speak with some moral Certainty of
 ‘ the prospect of their Success. I shall therefore,
 ‘ without further Apology, give you a summary Ac-
 ‘ count of what has passed in regard to myself since
 ‘ my Arrival in *London*, and let you know what Steps
 ‘ I have taken, and intend to pursue, in order to se-
 ‘ cure the accomplishment of my future Designs.

‘ Soon after my Arrival in *London*, I found that
 ‘ unless I entered into some Agreement with Mr.
 ‘ *Rich*, and that suddenly, Mr. *Barry* would certain-
 ‘ ly be engaged at *Covent-garden*. I wanted by all
 ‘ means to send him to *Dublin*, as I thought nothing
 ‘ else could hinder the Stage there from sinking to the
 ‘ lowest ebb. This made me hastily enter into an
 ‘ Engagement with Mr. *Rich* for a Share of the Pro-
 ‘ fits on such Nights as I should perform, without ha-
 ‘ ving weighed Circumstances properly, or guarded
 ‘ against Events. [Here followed a Narrative of the
 whole Transaction between Mr. *Rich* and him, and
 its Consequences.] ‘ Notwithstanding what I suffer-
 ‘ ed on this Occasion, I have no doubt upon me but
 ‘ that every Thing has happened for the best; and I
 ‘ have so perfect a Reliance on the Dispensations of
 ‘ that Providence, which knows what is good for us
 ‘ better than we ourselves, that I bore my Disap-
 ‘ pointments not only with Resignation, but with
 ‘ Cheerfulness. I thought I saw the Hand of Heaven
 ‘ pointing out another way of Life for me, which
 ‘ from the Beginning I had in view, which was the
 ‘ Object of all my Thoughts and Wishes, which alone
 ‘ supported my Spirits in my fatiguing Journey to-
 ‘ wards

wards it, through the miry and thorny Roads of the Stage; and yet which I was delaying too long to seek, without considering the Danger of Procrastination, and the short Date of human Life. I felt an irresistible Impulse which prompted me to quit the beaten Road, and strike thro' untrodden Paths, rugged and impervious as they might seem, in quest of this new Region. The greatest Obstacle I had to encounter was my Health, which I found had been much impaired; yet in spite of the continued Attacks of a Disorder the most dispiriting in the World, I began and finished an Essay on *Bruijsb Education*, in the space of not many Weeks; a Work only calculated to pave the way for my other Designs. I sent some over to *Ireland* before their Publication here, and ordered that one should be presented to you immediately on their Arrival. I hope you have long since received it, and shall impatiently expect your Sentiments upon it. The Opinion of those whom I would most wish to please, is of far more Consequence to me than the rest of the World. Could the Approbation of Persons of Judgment here content me, I should have no Reason to look farther; but I own my Satisfaction will be far from complete, unless I find that Approbation confirmed by the Sentiments of some few in *Ireland*, whose Abilities and Virtues have long been the Objects of my Esteem and Admiration, and whose friendly Conduct towards me, in Times of Danger and Distress, have excited the warmest Emotions of Heart which Gratitude can inspire.

Whatever Success my Plan may meet with in this Country, (and indeed from the Number of Persons already engaged to patronize it, eminent both for Rank and Abilities, I think it can scarce fail of answering my Expectations). I shall still have some Uneasiness at the Bottom of my Heart that it was not executed in the Place for which I always designed it, in my native Country. I am the more concerned,

because

* because I am satisfied that there never was a Scheme
 * so well calculated to promote the Prosperity of Ire-
 * land. And I swear by all that is sacred, that were
 * I Master of an independent Fortune, no Considera-
 * tion of superior Gains, or a more extensive Fame,
 * should detain me here, but I would immediately
 * return home, and rather endeavour to establish it
 * there at the Hazard of suffering in my Circumstan-
 * ces, than remain here with a Certainty of increa-
 * sing my Fortune. These Notions may be thought
 * mad or romantic in these illiberal Times, but how-
 * ever the *Amor Patriæ*, once the strongest Incentive
 * to Action, may be now exploded as an empty No-
 * tion, by Men wholly absorbed in Selfishness, I feel
 * it's Energy too strongly in my Heart not to believe
 * that there is something real and substantial in it;
 * and when I cast my Eyes towards you, and a few
 * more, I find I am not singular in my Opinion. Nor
 * do these Sentiments in me proceed from instinctive
 * Feelings or Prejudice, but have a more rational
 * Foundation. I do not think that Chance governs
 * the Article of our Birth any more than it does the
 * other Things of this World. I look upon the
 * Country where a Man is born to be the Place poin-
 * ted out by Providence for his Scene of Action; that
 * whatever Talents are given him ought to be exerci-
 * sed with a View to the Advantage of that particu-
 * lar Place in preference to any other; and that if he
 * voluntarily quits the Post allotted him, he is guilty
 * of a Breach of Duty. But I have got into a Sub-
 * ject which will carry me too far if I do not check
 * myself; I shall therefore only say, that whenever it
 * is in my Power I shall demonstrate my Principles by
 * my Actions.*

Copy

* Whilst Things wore the same Aspect in Ireland that they had
 * done when he left it, Mr. Sheridan could have no Thoughts of re-
 * turning to that Kingdom. At the Time therefore of his writing

Copy of a Letter from Mr. Sheridan, to Mr. Victor in
London.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE but two Objections to the Scheme proposed, one is the bringing over the Family of the *Macklins*, with whom most certainly I will have no Connexion, the other is the Price of thirty Pounds per Night, by which I should be out of Pocket. This Winter I have stood at fifty Pounds per Night Expence, nor can the utmost Frugality bring it lower than thirty five, exclusive of Rent, Wardrobe, and all certain annual Expences: At that Sum therefore am I willing to fix it, and no lower. Whatever Agreement Mr. *Barry* may make with Mrs. *Woffington*, Mr. *Shuter*, or Mr. *Woodward*, (who would I think be the more useful of the two) I shall readily join him in. All the other Articles are entirely agreeable to me. If the Agreement is concluded, they cannot set out too soon for *Ireland*; nor can you be too quick in transmitting the Account to me, as the Company are now forming their Schemes for the Summer, and will soon disperse, if there be not some Certainty of their being employed here. It is necessary that I should know who are the Persons to be depended on, that

F

I may

the above Letter, he had formed his Plan entirely for *England*, and upon the first proposing his Scheme, he met with such Encouragement as would probably have fixed him there for Life, had not two important Events, which happened at that critical Juncture, given him Hopes of being able to reassume and pursue, with some Prospect of Success, his long-concerted Plan for the Advantage of his native Country. The Instant the first Glimpse of that appeared to him, he quitted all Thoughts of any other Pursuit; he shut his Eyes against Difficulties, and once more embarked in his dangerous Undertaking.

I may model the Company accordingly. You surprise me by saying that Mr. Barry had made an Offer to me of renting *Aungier-street* or *Smock-alley* Theatre, and was rejected. No Proposal in his Name was ever made. Mr. Sowdon indeed made me an Offer of six hundred Pounds for my Interest in the Lease of *Aungier-street*, but it was entirely in his own Name, without the least mention of any other Person's being concerned.

Give my Service to Mr. Barry; tell him from me, that he will consult his own Interest much if he will suspend the Execution of any Design he may have formed till he has an Opportunity of seeing and talking with me. We have been too long kept at a Distance from each other, and have both suffered by it. We have both been too long a Prey to artful and designing Men, whose Interest it was to widen the Breach between us. Let him beware of the Snares of such Men who wanting Force to rise themselves would be carried on his Shoulders. He has some Friends in *Dublin*, of whose good Sense and Attachment to him he can have no doubt. Before them will I lay open a Plan which it shall be clearly his Interest to pursue a safe, an eligible, and a profitable Plan, instead of one full of Difficulty, Danger, and endless Troubles which he does not at present foresee, and of which he will never see an End if he once embarks. Let him know that I am willing that every Thing past should be obliterated from our Memories; and that we should now begin a new Score upon a solid Principle, that of contributing mutually to each other's Service, whilst it is our mutual Interest so to do. I am much mistaken if this will not turn out the most useful Connexion ever made. We have both had several which have been prejudicial to us; we have had Differences

rences, which have not been serviceable to us; it is time we should make ourselves and each other Amends.

May the 15th.

To Mr. Victor.

Amount of twenty five dollars
paid on an Average

And

What a fine Mr. Stevens has had upon his hands in this performance as an Actor. Let any one reflect upon Mr. Barry had nothing else to attend to in this, but he had almost a month more to play the part of a husband of a wife exceeds Mr. Stevens's of performing in Dublin, after his long's tiring. A. A. This is Mr. Stevens's TWELFTH season.

ACCIDENT

(44)

An Account of the Receipts of Plays in which Mr.
Sberidan performed since *Christmäss*, this Season,
1758, viz.

			l.	s.	d.
Jan.	28th.	To Amount of <i>Essex</i>	96	0	9
	31st.	To ditto <i>Distress'd Mother</i>	90	8	1
Febr.	2d.	To <i>Venice Preserv'd</i>	88	1	6
	4th.	To ditto <i>Provok'd Husband</i>	56	11	0
	6th.	To ditto <i>Hamlet</i>	118	4	11
	9th.	To ditto <i>Essex</i>	69	0	2
	11th.	To ditto <i>Phædra</i>	99	4	8
	13th.	To ditto <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	79	7	1
	16th.	To ditto <i>Comus</i>	41	8	9
	18th.	To ditto <i>Stratagem</i>	79	13	7
	20th.	To ditto <i>Macbeth</i>	98	1	11
	27th.	To ditto <i>Richard the Third</i>	110	19	9
March	3d.	To do. <i>Tancred and Sigismunda</i>	87	3	1
	4th.	To ditto <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	58	19	9
	6th.	To ditto <i>Coriolanus</i>	58	7	10
	9th.	To ditto <i>Phædra</i>	44	5	1
	10th.	To ditto <i>Douglas</i>	84	0	3
	11th.	To ditto <i>Richard</i>	100	14	7
	13th.	To ditto <i>Romeo</i>	57	8	4
	15th.	To ditto <i>Tancred</i>	43	0	2
	16th.	To ditto <i>Douglas</i>	73	19	10

Amount of twenty one Nights 1635 1 7
£. 77 17 2 per Night on an Average.

N. B. This is Mr. Sberidan's TWELFTH Season of performing in *Dublin*, Mrs. Fitz-Henry's THIRD. Mr. Sberidan has not appear'd in one new Character. Mr. Barry's Number of Nights exceeds Mr. Sberidan by five, but he had almost a Month more to play them in. Mr. Barry had nothing else to attend to but his Performance as an Actor. Let any one reflect what Affairs Mr. Sberidan has had upon his Hands since *Christmäss*.

Account

Account of the Receipts of Plays in which Mr. Barry performed, from January 1755, to the Commencement of the Benefits, viz.

Jan.	1st.	Essex	51	10	3
	3d.	Distress'd Mother	54	3	4
	8th.	Orphan	77	11	4
	10th.	Ditto	56	18	7
	15th.	Venice Preserv'd	66	1	8
	17th.	Macbeth	126	10	8
	20th.	Othello	86	4	8
	22d.	Jane Shore	76	2	1
	23d.	Romeo	72	8	5
	24th.	Macbeth	104	2	2
	27th.	Essex	96	18	1
	29th.	Hamlet	43	9	11
	31st.	King John	78	0	0
Febr.	3d.	Oroonoko	75	17	9
	5th.	Macbeth	63	12	11
	11th.	Essex	72	7	4
	14th.	Theodosius	54	4	5
	17th.	Siege of Damascus	87	0	1
	19th.	Oroonoko	45	4	7
	21st.	Romeo	73	12	3
	24th.	Philoclea	95	12	1
	26th.	Siege of Damascus	65	1	1
	28th.	Henry the Fifth	36	18	10
March	5th.	Philoclea	53	10	4
	10th.	Theodosius	42	8	3
	12th.	Othello	58	2	5

Amount of twenty six Nights 1813 15 2
 £ 69 15 2 per Night on an Average.

N. B. This may be call'd Mr. Barry's FIRST Year as an Actor of considerable Reputation. He had been absent from the Kingdom eight Years. He had two new Actresses to assist him. It was the FIRST Year

Of Mrs. *Nix-Henry's* (then Mrs. *Gregory*) performing here, which all Persons acquainted with Theatrical Affairs must know to be an Article of great moment in point of drawing Audiences. The comparative View is taken after *Christmas*, because it is to be supposed that Novelty and Curiosity have always a great Share in filling the Houses at the first setting out of newly arrived Performers; and as Mr. *Barry* did not begin to play till the 20th of *November*, it is to be supposed, that the Receipts might hold good till *Christmas* upon those Principles.

58 3 2
 42 8 3
 53 10 4
 30 18 10
 05 1 1
 05 1 1
 05 12 1
 73 12 3
 45 4 7
 87 0 1
 54 4 5
 75 7 4
 03 12 11
 75 17 0
 78 0 0
 43 0 11
 00 18 1
 101 2 2
 75 8 5
 70 2 1
 88 4 3

1813-1814

W. E. This may be called Mr. Dwyer's FIRST Year as an Actor of considerable reputation. He had been added from the Kingston eight Year. He had two new Actresses to assist him. It was the FIRST Year